nemo

the classic comics library

No. 3
October
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Excerpts from Segar's Unpublished Popeye Novel!

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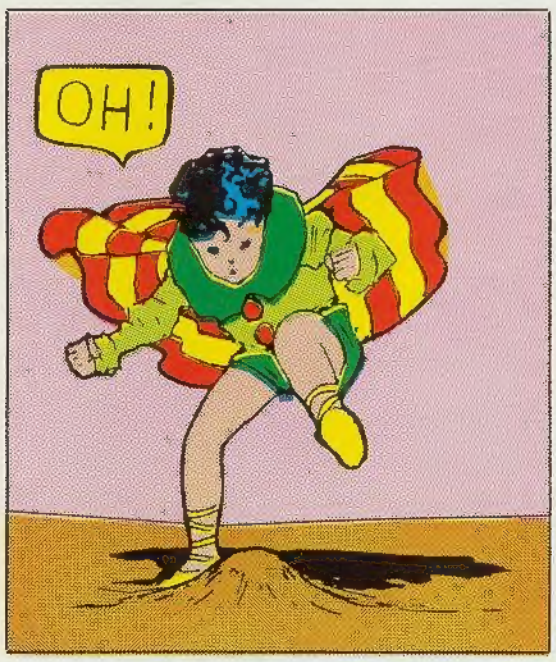
Plus: Early, forgotten strips by Segar!



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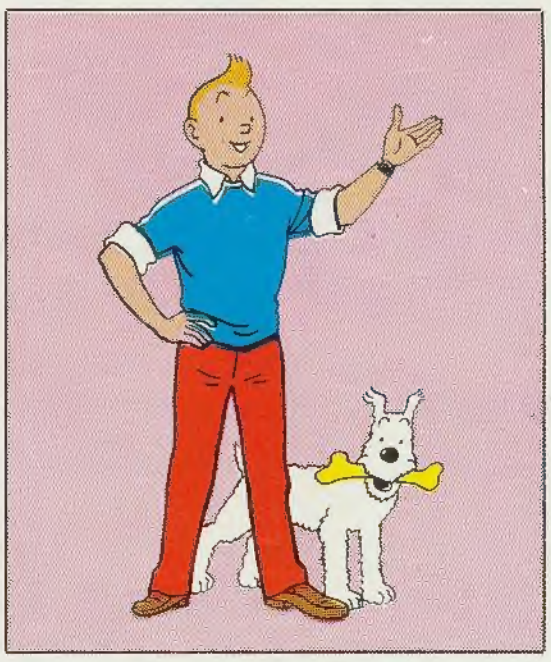

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The life and work of
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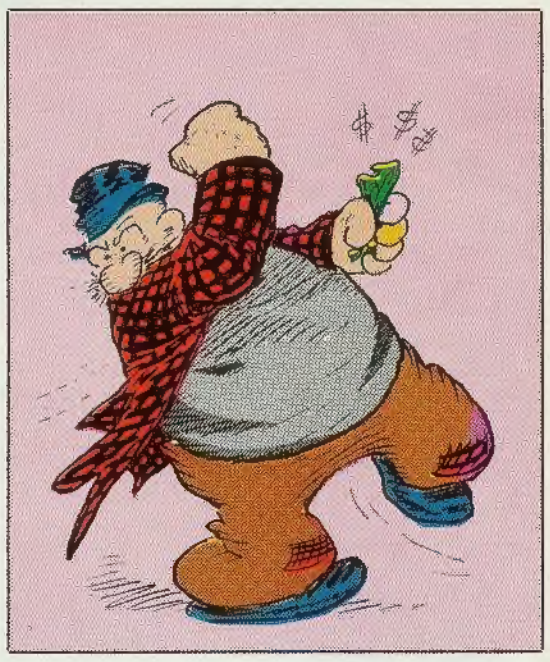
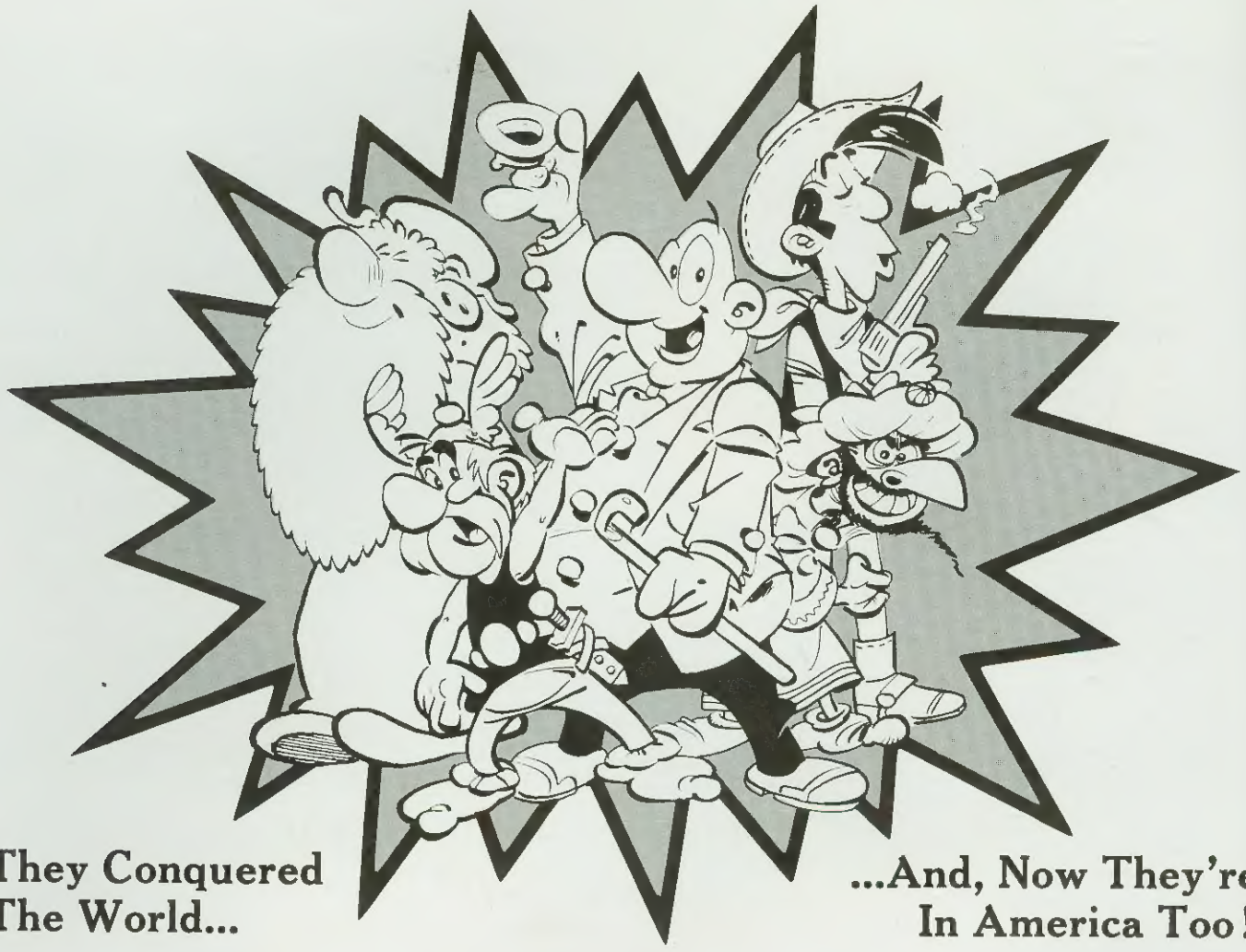


"Youse is a Viper!"
Billy DeBeck's classic
Parlor, Bedroom and Sink

They Sold 150,000,000 Books Worldwide...
...And They Are STILL
"The Next Generation!"



They Conquered The World...

...And, Now They're In America Too!

● **Asterix** (The Gaul) ● **Lucky Luke** (The cowboy who shoots faster than his own shadow) ● **Leonardo** (The genius) ● **Walter Melon** (The...er...well, he has a big nose) ● **Iznogoud** (Who should have been caliph of Bagdad instead of that other guy)...

If even one of these names sounds unfamiliar to you,
there's a big hole in your knowledge of the comics.

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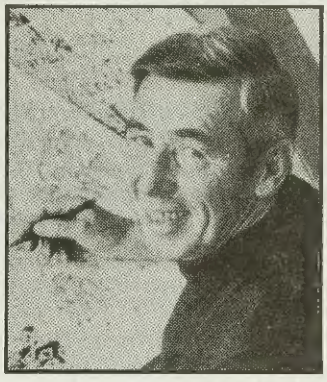
nemo contents

Editorial by Richard Marschall ____ 5

Coming Next Issue ____ 4

6
The Segar Nobody Knows
A chronicle of the forgotten early creations by this great cartoonist. Also: excerpts from his unpublished *Popeye* novel!

20
Thimble Theater: Cartoonists Center Stage!
In two hilarious episodes—from 1928 and 1933—Segar satirized his own profession!



26
Les Aventures d'Hergé
A famous European cartoonist, Greg, documents the achievements of—and his friendship with—the creator of *Tintin*, one of comics' greats.

34
Lifting the Veil on Slumberland
In recently discovered manuscripts, Winsor McCay discusses his inspirations and career, advises cartoonists and animators.

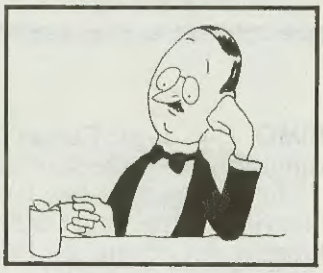
41
A Paean to the Everyday

One of America's premier critics—Donald Phelps—joins NEMO with a look back at J.R. Williams

46
"Youse Is a Viper!"

Billy DeBeck's *Parlor, Bedroom and Sink* may have been his "top strip" in more ways than one.

60
Penmen of the Past: Gluyas Williams



A retrospective look at the work of this great cartoonist. Also: His last interview!

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Coming In Nemo #4!

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A FORGOTTEN WESTERN CLASSIC—Warren Tufts, creator of the great *Casey Ruggles*, independently syndicated his own full-page Sunday comic (the very last designed in that format) without restrictions and censorship. We present a complete sequence introduced by Alex Toth!

FATHER OF THE ADVENTURE STRIP—As far back as the 1920s (contrary to most of the standard histories) there was Rampant Adventure in newspaper strips. One of the pioneers was George Storm, whose creations swarmed with violence, action, suspense, and mystery. NEMO presents a full biography of Storm, taken from personal archives, and many examples of his strips.

PLAYWRIGHT FOR PAPER ACTORS—In his long career, Allen Saunders scripted some of the most exciting adventure strips in history—like *Steve Roper* and *Kerry Drake*—as well as his famous *Mary Worth*. In the next issue NEMO begins the exclusive autobiography of Saunders, starting with his days as a strip fan 75 years ago, to his days as a writer for the pulps, to leadership in the strip field...

PENMAN OF THE PAST—Most fans remember Harrison Cady as the cutesy illustrator of the *Mother Westwind* kid stories. But at the turn of the century he drew incredibly detailed cartoons on themes ranging from wild fantasy to morbid predictions of doom. Discover his unbelievable art!

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Among NEMO's writers are the finest and most respected historians in the field: Bill Blackbeard, Ron Goulart, Tom Andrae, Donald Phelps, Martin Williams, Rick Norwood, Rick Marschall, and many others.

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Editorial

Onward.

Welcome to part three of our continuing quest for the best, the most interesting, the most significant parts of the heritage of comics. The response to NEMO's debut is very impressive, and we are still receiving congratulations and letters of support from all quarters—pros, fans, and scholars.

In this issue we are proud to continue our tender tradition of revealing historical blockbusters (previously, we have presented forgotten George Herriman masterpieces and Siegel and Shuster's original, villain-persona, origin of *Superman*): In the following pages are reprinted for the first time since their inception some seminal creations of Elzie Segar. And, more likely to set fans and scholars salivating, some excerpts from a *Popeye* novel penned by Segar in 1930. No words of it have ever before seen publication.

It is not one of our arbitrary goals to set off such bombshells in every single issue of NEMO; there are many quieter classics and personalities no less worthy of documentation. But we are reminded of the most exciting aspect of comics historiography—its very depth. *So* much good work has been done... *so* many interesting features and personalities have gone before... *so* much has been obscured and forgotten... that it is possible to keep a real sense of excitement about not only the quality we absorb, but the surprises around each corner.

We are reminded as well of the varied components of the art form itself. Bill Blackbeard has remarked about peoples' response to recent illuminations of *Polly and Her Pals*, such as in his *Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics* or in NEMO #1. Visitors to the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art have been requesting viewing of pages from the period when Cliff Sterrett experimented with bold designs and surreal figuration, he says; and they are, largely, not appreciating the strip—or strips in general—as a narrative art.

Our view is that the comic strip is not *exclusively* a graphic art or narrative art. To strain to define it either way denies the necessity, yet far from fulfilled, to deal with the comics on their own level, with their own structure and integrities.

Our view is that as historians even more than as artists we should strive for not an ameliorization of these two foci, but rather encourage their predominance whenever appropriate. And, of course, the graphic and narrative aspects will never be mutually exclusive, else we deal with something other than strips. Indeed artists in the course of their careers can sway happily, creatively, from one preoccupation to the other, and Sterrett is a prime example: his Sunday pages from the 'teens are brilliant examples of comic narration and structure, just as the Sundays from 1927-32 are inspired visual and graphic statements.

So too does our view at NEMO devolve to an editorial policy. On some pages we feature complete stories, focusing on narratives; in our portfolio pages we offer selected individual examples of artists' best work. Our early mail has been running about even for more of *both*.

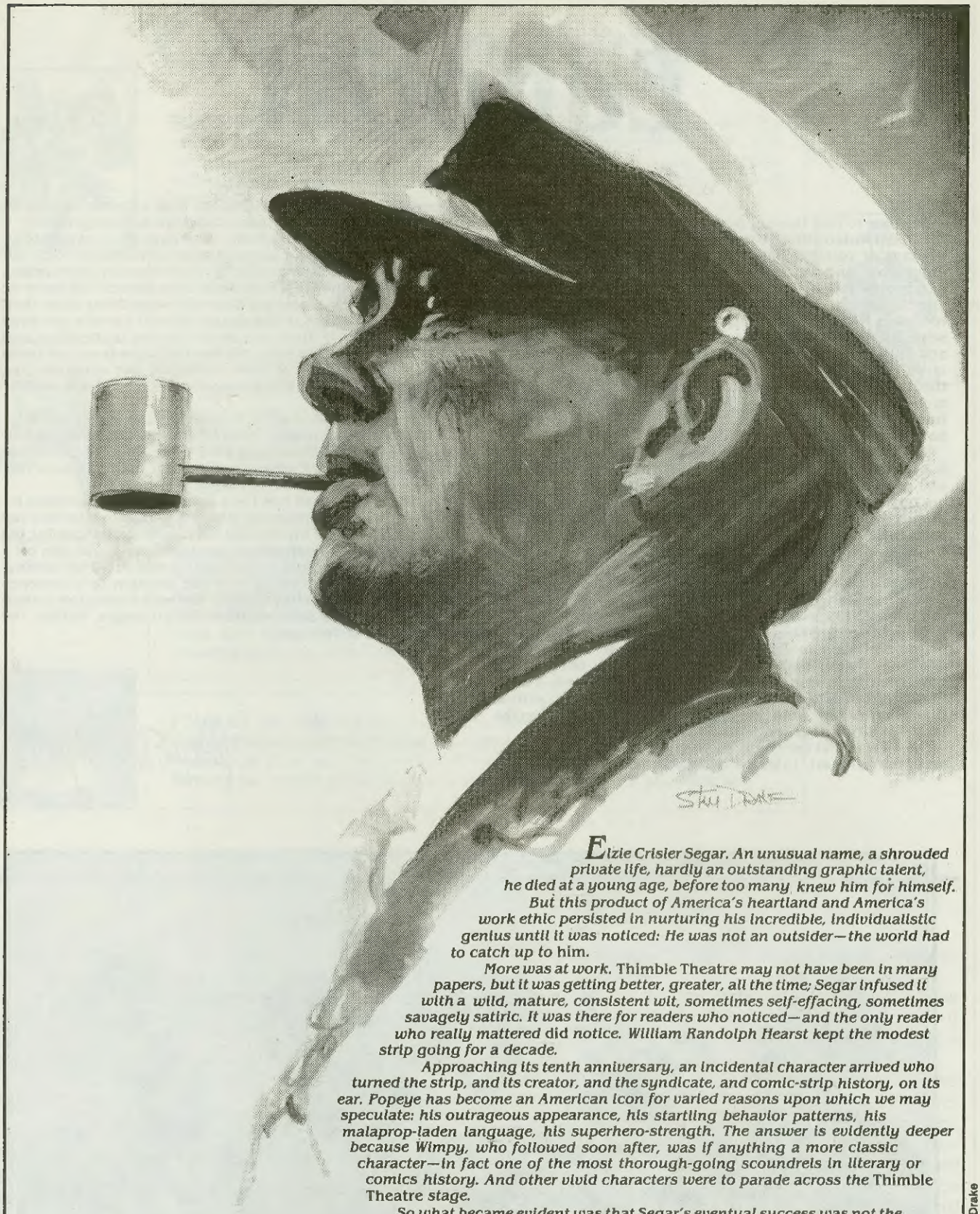
Also, our early mail has been loaded with suggestions for strips to run (we will respond, and dig), people to interview (we are grateful for the input), and even format changes for the magazine (even demands that we go monthly and spin off a series of reprint books!). Keep those cards and letters coming. Currently we are wrestling over the decision to commence running a readers' letter section; the only hesitation centering on whether to subtract from the art pages. Rather, the graphic/narrative pages.

Upward.

Richard Marschall

Photo by Eppis Goniff

YOUR STAFF—A living, breathing correspondent named Ger Appeldoorn from Holland has written with the rather singular request that we publish photographs of the faces behind the names on our masthead. This we are glad to do, and are fortunate enough to have had a photographer present at our last editorial conference, pictured above. From left to right (l to r) are: Richard (Rick) Marschall, Gary Groth, Kim Thompson, and Peppy White. The fifth person is not Mike Catron, who was actually on the road garnering some of *NEMO*'s voluminous ad pages, but Janet Toombs, crack typesetter, who can be seen trying to play Pac-Man on her video display terminal (note the frustration on her face! Ha! Ha!).



Elzie Crisler Segar. An unusual name, a shrouded private life, hardly an outstanding graphic talent, he died at a young age, before too many knew him for himself. But this product of America's heartland and America's work ethic persisted in nurturing his incredible, individualistic genius until it was noticed: He was not an outsider—the world had to catch up to him.

More was at work. Thimble Theatre may not have been in many papers, but it was getting better, greater, all the time; Segar infused it with a wild, mature, consistent wit, sometimes self-effacing, sometimes savagely satiric. It was there for readers who noticed—and the only reader who really mattered did notice. William Randolph Hearst kept the modest strip going for a decade.

Approaching its tenth anniversary, an incidental character arrived who turned the strip, and its creator, and the syndicate, and comic-strip history, on its ear. Popeye has become an American icon for varied reasons upon which we may speculate: his outrageous appearance, his startling behavior patterns, his malaprop-laden language, his superhero-strength. The answer is evidently deeper because Wimpy, who followed soon after, was if anything a more classic character—in fact one of the most thorough-going scoundrels in literary or comics history. And other vivid characters were to parade across the Thimble Theatre stage.

So what became evident was that Segar's eventual success was not the fortuitous result of a character that happened to "hit," or something that was automatically ripe for merchandising. Segar had struck his special stride—his genius was in full flower. He was an American humorist of the first rank, combining humor, satire, parody, pathos and even poetry. Everything he touched became pure gold—whether legitimate suspense tales or silly stories replete with inside jokes—wrapped, albeit, in homely packages.

What were the contradictions in a rough-cut stone are now recognized as facets of a wonderful, rare gem. Elzie Crisler Segar had attained his rightful place in history, quietly but doggedly climbing there, mixing his own brew of unflagging determination and quiet, gentle genius.

—Rick Marschall

Painted for NEMO by Stan Drake

E.C. Segar's Knockouts of 1925 (and low blows before and after):

THE THIMBLE THEATER
Now Showing—"False Encouragement."
Tomorrow—"He Has Himself to Blame."
Registered U. S. Patent Office.
I HAVE DECIDED UPON A CAREER OF CRIME— NOTICE THE TIN CUP WITHOUT A BOTTOM
HEY MISTER, YOUR OLD CUP IS ALL RUSTY LET ME HAVE IT AND I'LL GIVE YOU A BRAND NEW ONE
THANKS
HELP!
BUSINESS IS ROTTEN!
POOR OLD MAN HE LOOKS KINDA SAD I'LL CHEER HIM UP WITH A DOLLAR
THANK YOU
CLINK
WILL NOBODY SAVE THIS BOY FROM A LIFE OF CRIME!
1-20

All *Thimble Theatre* strips courtesy and © King Features Syndicate

San Francisco Academy of Comic Art

The Unknown Thimble Theatre Period

by Bill Blackbeard

Bill Blackbeard again unearths startling and previously unrecorded comic strip data, this time about E.C. Segar's pre-Popeye work, including his Popeye prototypes in the 1920s and his completed but unpublished Popeye novel of 1930, The Sea Hag...

In comic strips, there sometimes seems to be nothing new under the fun. Surely, we would think, Elzie Crisler Segar could not have invented a super-strong prize-fighting character before Popeye... but he did. And not just once, but twice, both times in *Thimble Theatre* between the strip's start in 1919 and Popeye's appearance in 1929. Just as there were strips and comics features called *Dennis the Menace, Snoopy, Hairbreadth Harold,* and *Believe It or Not* before the creation of the classic versions of these titles by Hank Ketcham, Charles Schulz, C.W. Kahles (who thoughtfully switched a final syllable), and Robert L. Ripley; just as there was a super-strong hero (done absolutely straight) in 1903, 35 years before Superman; a 1926 comic strip dog called Pluto, and a pair of cartoon rodents named Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse in a 1910 *Good Housekeeping* series of text-and-cartoon narratives by Johnny Gruelle; just as Clare "Dwig" Dwiggins was featuring intricate comic strip inventions in his *School Days* Sunday strip years before Rube Goldberg diagrammed his first contraption; just so did E.C. Segar populate the canvas of a series of comic strip boxing rings with house-lifting, horse-kayoing ugly shrimp prize-fighters years prior to his introduction of the immortal Popeye. This piece for *NEMO*'s special focus on Segar will cover this almost totally unknown aspect of the classic *Thimble Theatre* daily strip, as well as giving the gist of the strip's development between 1919 and 1929.

In 1917, E.C. Segar was working for a dying newspaper, James Keeley's Chicago *Herald.* Although the relatively new paper (it had been launched in 1914 by Keeley on the remains of the old Chicago *Record-Herald,* which he had bought at the apogee of a highly successful editorial career on the Chicago *Tribune*) fielded an impressive group of comic strips through its J. Keeley Syndicate, its staff had failed to promote them effectively to other newspapers, and the comics revenues were falling month by month. Charlie Chaplin, who had licensed Keeley to release a daily and Sun-

Collection of Rick Marschall

A Sunday *Charlie Chaplin* page by Segar, crude but animated, from the *Chicago Herald* (1916).

day strip called *Charlie Chaplin's Comic Capers* in 1915, was unhappy with the dwindling return in royalties the strip was bringing him after an initial burst of success in its first year, and cancelled his agreement. Segar, who had been assigned to continue the Chaplin feature in the wake of a couple of uninspired, short-lived artists who succeeded the strip's initial and highly talented illustrator, A.C. Carrothers, found he had his strip shot from under him virtually overnight. Not at all phased, the young cartoonist (who had gotten his Chaplin character onto the battlefields of France at the point of cancellation, thus indirectly anticipating Chaplin's own *Shoulder Arms* film feature of 1918) switched graphic gears and turned his Chaplin into a big-nosed private named Barry the Boob, who continued to screw things up at the Front. *Barry the Boob* (which ran only on Sundays) was not a particularly engaging or amusing comic; it had been too hastily cobbled up out of the ruins of the *Chaplin* strip to have any conceptual appeal of its own, and Segar's art was clumsy and hackneyed at this time, providing little of the enormous visual impact that was to characterize his work of the middle 1920s and later. Unfortunately, it looked very much like what it was: the weakest comic strip in a newspaper whose circulation was sixth in a 1917 Chicago line-up of six. (The motto of the sorry *Herald* of that date might well have been, "We're Number Six, and we're *not* trying harder; in fact, we wish some other paper would buy us up and put us out of our misery.")

Oddly, the *other* three *Herald* Sunday comic pages were not at all bad, and would not have looked out of place in the *Chicago Tribune's* Sunday funnies of the time. Billy De Beck was doing early comic strip work for the *Herald*, in a daily and Sunday feature called *Married Life* (the prototype of the later *Barney Google*); as was Frank Willard, whose *Mrs. Pipp'n's Husband* was sharp and funny, but in no way foreshadowing his classic *Moon Mullins* work of later years. Oscar Hitt —a cartoonist little discussed in strip history, but the master of a fine and funny comic line —was drawing a competent page called *Mama's Darlings*, one of a couple of direct *Katzenjammer Kids* imitations of the period, which was later to get him a well-deserved berth ghosting Dirks's *Captain and the Kids* page in the 1920s. But Segar, his strip work abruptly bereft of the universally appealing Chaplin figure which had kept it palatable, was obviously foundering for a lack of competent style, appealing characters, and good gags in *Barry the Boob*. The one thing the page did have, and the sole aspect which must have kept the *Herald*'s dwindling readership paying attention to it, was a nervy brashness which seemed to say, "Hey! *Look* at all the wild slapstick goings-on over here! This is obviously a good-times page, right, folks? See the CRASHES and BANGS and BOOMS! You're missing kicksville here, gang, if you don't shape up and pay attention NOW!" Kids of a certain age must have loved *Barry the Boob*—but kids rarely bought many copies of big-city newspapers.

William Randolph Hearst *did*, however, buy just such newspapers—completely: lock, stock, and staff when the price looked right. And by 1918, the price was right for the sinking Chicago *Herald*. (A paper which could not prosper in the middle of a major world war, when city readers were ripping a dozen editions a day of every paper in sight off the newsstands, was clearly ready for the ash heap.) The *Herald*'s presses rolled out its last edition at the close of April, 1918, after which its remaining subscribers were added to the roster of Hearst's Chicago *Examiner*—now renamed the *Herald-Examiner*. Of the *Herald*'s crew of cartoonists, only De Beck was signed on by Hearst; Segar—whose *Barry the Boob* had lasted just a little over seven months, running from September 23, 1917 through April 28, 1918—was out in the cold, rainy April Chicago streets, un*Herald*ed, and unemployed.

But the nervy brashness which seems to

have activated Segar at this time took him into the offices of the *Herald-Examiner*'s companion afternoon paper, the Chicago *Evening American*. Word had reached him some time before that the editor of the *American*'s theatrical page had been looking for ways to pep up reader interest (the better to garner additional advertising inches from the city theatres), and since Segar himself had long been an inveterate film and playgoer, he suggested the idea of an *illustrated* series of daily reviews of plays and movies to the editor. The lively and highly comic little drawings Segar brought as samples—they had exactly the visual point and thematic punch his Sunday page had so painfully lacked—did the trick, and the relieved young cartoonist saw his first daily *Looping the Loop* review feature in the *American* on Saturday, June 1, 1918.

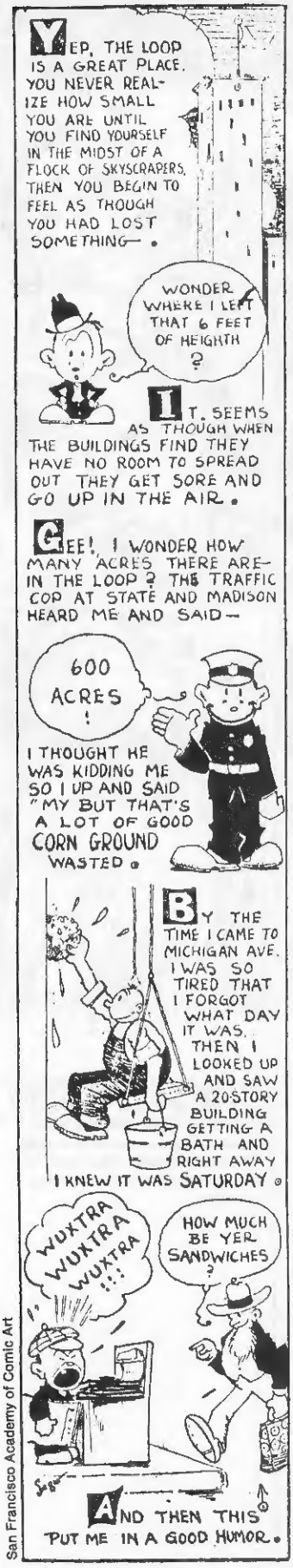
The remarkable thing about the very first sketches in the oblong, column-wide daily feature by Segar was their showcasing of a graphic style markedly at variance from that of the *Barry the Boob* pages of only a month before. The stiff, contrived, fully detailed comic figures of the *Herald* comic, blundering through amateurishly scrawled backgrounds of wartime France, had been replaced by perfectly rendered, little vignette characters, charmingly reduced to the few lines necessary to make them vital and alive and individual, while background items were made real and effective by their very simplification to essential delineative elements. The seemingly sudden graphic sophistication on display in *Looping the Loop* would probably have been connected by no one with the adolescent contrivances of *Barry* had it not been for the "Segar" (even now adorned with the smoking cigar butt of later years) which tilted rakishly at the bottom of every *Loop*. But it was likely that only a minority of the *American* readers had every seen *Barry* in any event, so that the butterfly transformation of the young cartoonist caterpillar went generally unremarked upon.

Looping the Loop was a considerable hit with *American* readers, and with theatre managers as well. The paper's theatrical advertising did pick up—in fact, Segar himself was tapped to design and draw advertisements for a number of live Chicago shows during his stint on the *American*—and the new toast of the Loop found himself being paid considerably more than he had ever seen for his *Chaplin* or *Barry* work. Segar's review technique on the new feature was notable in itself: rather than directly praising or knocking a production (the latter quite possibly being a no-no for a theatrical page trying to build ad revenue), the young cartoonist *kidded* all plays and films equally, carefully telling the reader a good bit about the story and characters in the process, thus informing and amusing everyone without taking a detectable stand on any particular work. This approach would have been almost impossible in prose except for a burgeoning S.J. Perelman, but it worked delectably for Segar—and in time it got him the continuing, amused attention of the Old Man of the newspaper chain himself, ensconced in the New York offices of his flagship paper, the morning *American*, where he daily pored over the incoming editions of the chain's other papers from Los Angeles to Boston, occasionally noting just such new talents as Segar's. Hearst liked Segar's simple, funny style, and he had an idea exactly where he could use the cartoonist in his New York comic strip lineup. Imperiously, Segar was summoned to Manhattan and—plebeianly delighted—Segar went, late in the winter of 1919.

What Hearst needed at the time was some kind of simple daily strip which could be printed in an upright oblong two-column space on his New York *Evening Journal* comic page, to the left of the stacked tier of full-size daily strips which occupied the bulk of the page with features by George Herriman, Cliff Sterrett, Harry Hershfield, and other cartoonist titans of the time (all of whom dutifully punched the *Journal* timeclock every morning

CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S COMIC-CAPERS
I'M NIGHT BEHIND YOU
HOW CARELESS OF ME NOT BRINGING ANYTHING TO KILL 'IM WITH
CARELESS INDEED
HURRY BACK CAUSE I'M NEARLY STARVED
YOU GO TO CAMP AND COOK THE BEAR FOR DINNER, I'M GOING TO INVITE THE KING TO DINE WITH US
IT'LL BE SOME FEED
WELL WELL THERE'S THE KING'S PET LION GUESS I'LL MAKE FRIENDS WITH HIM
KINK
DON'T PLAY SO ROUGH WITH MY LIONNIE
I CAME TO INVITE YOU TO A SWELL FEAST
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO BEFO
YUM YUM
SOME FEED KING HURRY I GOT SOME APPETITE
IT'S WORTH YOUR TROUBLE KING
YOUR PART ISN'T DONE YET CHARLIE
Collection of Rick Marschall

Another *Chaplin* page by Segar. It is interesting to note that in the days when all films were silent, Segar—and presumably Chaplin himself, who licensed the portrayal—had the Tramp speak.


YEP, THE LOOP IS A GREAT PLACE. YOU NEVER REALIZE HOW SMALL YOU ARE UNTIL YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE MIDST OF A FLOCK OF SKYSCRAPERS. THEN YOU BEGIN TO FEEL AS THOUGH YOU HAD LOST SOMETHING—
WONDER WHERE I LEFT THAT 6 FEET OF HEIGHTH ?
IT SEEMS AS THOUGH WHEN THE BUILDINGS FIND THEY HAVE NO ROOM TO SPREAD OUT THEY GET SORE AND GO UP IN THE AIR.
GEE!, I WONDER HOW MANY ACRES THERE ARE IN THE LOOP? THE TRAFFIC COP AT STATE AND MADISON HEARD ME AND SAID—
600 ACRES !
I THOUGHT HE WAS KIDDING ME SO I UP AND SAID "MY BUT THAT'S A LOT OF GOOD CORN GROUND WASTED.
BY THE TIME I CAME TO MICHIGAN AVE. I WAS SO TIRED THAT I FORGOT WHAT DAY IT WAS. THEN I LOOKED UP AND SAW A 20-STORY BUILDING GETTING A BATH AND RIGHT AWAY I KNEW IT WAS SATURDAY.
WUXTRA WUXTRA WUXTRA !!!
HOW MUCH BE YER SANDWICHES ?
AND THEN THIS PUT ME IN A GOOD HUMOR.

San Francisco Academy of Comic Art

ADVANCE DOPE ON THE WAR EXPOSITION
GRANT PARK SEPT. 2 TO 15
BUY YOUR TICKET NOW FOR TWO BITS — IT'S GONNA COST YOU FOUR BITS AT THE GATE
STORY OF A BOOB
I WILL NOT
WAR EXPOSIT BUY TICKETS NOW AND SAVE 25¢
BUY TICKETS NOW AND AVOID THE RUSH
NO
I'LL GET IN ABOUT TUESDAY 1976
AND THEN HE'LL BEEF ABOUT IT.
IF I'DA BOUGHT OUR TICKETS IN ADVANCE I'DA HADA NUFF LEFTA BUY SODY POP AND SALTY PEANUTS
BOOB !
ANOTHER BOOB
HOLY SMOKES !
THE TANK "BRITANNA" WILL CLIMB UP A TREE IF YOU THINK I AM KIDDING GO OVER AND SEE.
TOOT TOOT
HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO SEE REAL TRENCHES WITHOUT GETTING NAILED BY A SNIPER.
BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW FOR THE GREATEST EXPOSITION EVER PULLED OFF !!!!!
E.C.

Collection of Rick Marschall

Two examples of Segar's popular *Looping the Loop* feature for the Chicago *American*: The first column (June 1, 1918), and one from several months later, when the cigar-symbol had become his trademark.

before proceeding to the cartoonists' room to put in their daily assigned time drawing their strips). Previously, this excess page space had been filled by news items, classified ads, and serial story installments, but Hearst liked the idea of a well-packed comic page, and Segar's long, narrow *Loop* feature suggested to him that its creator would feel at home developing a strip in the same sort of space.

He was right about that; he was also right in shrewdly guessing that Segar, disencumbered of strip work for over a year, would be malleable in following suggestions for the development of the new comic. Hearst, always interested in matching other syndicates' top strips with similar features in his own line-up—when he found himself unable because of contracts or other impedimentia to buy their artists outright for his roster—probably felt he needed a comic melodrama along the lines of the Ledger Syndicate's highly popular *Hairbreadth Harry*; at the same time, he had lost Ed Wheelan and his *Midget Movies* from the Hearst ranks. (Wheelan, whose not entirely novel but well-developed idea of kidding the movies with small, multi-panelled strip serials in daily episodes had been a big hit with Hearst paper readers, had moved his new *Minute Movies* to the George Matthew Adams Service.) Accordingly, Hearst suggested Segar combine these elements—small panels with simple drawings; stage and movie melodrama takeoffs; a hero, heroine, and villain a`la Kahles's *Harry*; with the panels stacked in three rows to accommodate the comic page space to be filled—and the new talent, just in from winter-blasted Chicago and still blowing on his hands to limber them up, knuckled down to oblige.

The result, first printed in the *Evening Journal* on Friday, December 19, 1919 (and promptly introduced on other Hearst afternoon comic pages around the country over the next few days), was the ultimately famed *Thimble Theatre*. The little upright daily theatre initially presented a drama a day, featuring (a`la Wheelan's Follywood cast of *Minute Movies*) Olive Oyl as a plain-featured heroine, Harold Hamgravy as a varyingly garbed hero, and Willy Wormwood as a tophatted, lantern-jawed villain complete with moustache (and all too plainly based on Kahles's Rudolph Rassendale). Segar's drawing was done in the same slick, sharp, simplistic style of his *Loop* work, and his handling of the brief melodramatic satires—the first was titled "From Cabaret to Country," together with an announcement of the name of the next day's show, "The Dish of Death"—was deft and sophisticated. At the base of the last panel, large and forthright, was the Segar signature cigar, which he had introduced for the first time in the *Loop* feature more than a year before. The comic seems to have been a hit with editors from the start, since all the afternoon Hearst papers used it (Hearst editors usually having full leeway in choosing which Hearst strips to use locally), as it was with readers as well, since it remained in its tight, tall corner space on the national Hearst comic pages throughout the booze-and-jazz decade to follow.

Segar, however—clearly not overly happy with the Kahles *Harry* theme or the make-believe dramas in which his characters were to perform—gradually edged his new strip away from its initial concept, doing away altogether with the direct imitation of Rudolph Rassendale (Willy Wormwood appeared less and less often in the strip until he was dropped for good on March 5, 1920), easing out the melodrama satire, introducing new characters (notably Olive's "crazy" brother, Castor Oyl), and turning to daily gag sequences directly in-

THE THIMBLE THEATRE
Now Showing—"From Cabaret to Country"
Lizzie Lampshade..... Olive Oyl
Jed Simpson..... Harold Hamgravy
Copyright, 1919, King Features Syndicate, Inc.
LIZZIE LAMPSHADE THE SHIMMY KID IN A CABARET
I WANT TWO THINGS IN THIS WORLD- A WIFE- AND A CHURN THAT I WONT HAVE TO SHAKE
I'M GONNA FIND A WIFE AND AN AUTOMATIC CHURN
DOWN ON THE FARM
JED GOES TO THE CITY
WELL I'LL BE GOSH DARNED
IDEA
MARRY ME, WILLYA ?
SURE
WIFIE, THIS IS PAW AND MAW
HAS SHE GOT A CHILL ?
JED LAMPS ME-
AND PROPOSES
BACK ON THE FARM
HOLD STILL A M.NUTE
ED.SON IS A PIKER
THAT'S THE KND OF A WIFE TO HAVE
E.C.

San Francisco Academy of Comic Art

volving Olive, Castor, and Ham Gravy (whose name was alternatively spelled "Hamgravy" through much of the early 1920s, although his initial given name of Harold was omitted entirely after the first month). Segar even experimented with outright narrative continuity—a short, tropical-island shipwreck theme—as early as March 11, 1920. By the fourth month of the strip, Segar had made it completely his own, his discreet and unobtrusive shucking of the Hearst notions apparently not having met with objections from the Old Man, and the new comic strip terrain of *Thimble Theatre* lay wholly in the nervy young cartoonist's hands.

It is disappointing, in view of what a marvellously wild and inventive strip *Thimble Theatre* became in a few years, to see how little Segar initially did with his open-ended operation in its first few years. The gag-a-day paces through which Olive, Ham, and Castor were routinely put for months on end often seem flat and contrived to modern readers who know of how much more Segar was capable. The early jokes about Ham's long nose become particularly forced and obvious as the strip continued, although some less frequent gags dealing with Castor's fundamental sanity behind his apparent looniness wear a little better. But the delightful interplay of characters so typical of the later strip is sorely lacking. Visual gags dominated—to make him look ridiculous, for example, Ham Gravy's head is shaved by a rival for Olive's hand while he is asleep in the woods, but just before Olive arrives, a porcupine falls fortuitously off a tree limb, landing upside down on Ham's head and painfully supplying him with what appears to be "hair" to Olive's doting eyes—and the strip dialogue was largely perfunctory and pragmatic, a far cry from the often hilarious exchanges typical of the later strip. For a good part of this primitive period, too, Segar neglected the considerable potential (for him) of consecutive daily narrative, with its attendant subtlety of point and immediate reader involvement. Yet there is always evidence of a wholly individual and effective comic style in these early episodes, plus frequent spates of creative novelty (there are turns of unexpected and quite funny macabre wit at times) which apparently kept contemporary readers fascinated. The *Thimble Theatre* of 1920-1922 was clearly a continuing success in its small corner of the comic strip world—so much so that in early 1921, Segar was asked by Hearst to start a similar daily strip for his morning New York paper, the *American*. (This was *The Five-Fifteen*—later *Sappo*—which began on February 9, 1921 and proved quickly to be another quiet hit.)

A lesser artist would likely have hewed indefinitely to what appeared to be so successful a formula for easy reader entertainment, but Segar, now only in his late 20s, was still growing as a creative artist and author. Whenever he realized that a little tugging would open a new magic casement in *Thimble Theatre*, bringing in a flood of fresh light and fun, he got on tiptoe and pulled. Long, complex, suspenseful comic adventure stories? He gave one a try as early as Sept. 20, 1921, casting Ham and Olive up on the grim shores of a cannibal island for a six-week lark of chase and slapstick. That worked well, so on July 31, 1922, he wound up and let go with the first real *Thimble Theatre* epic, "Great Gobs of Gold," a bizarre, satirical study of the effects of African wealth on his characters which rambled delightfully on for months, involving a fake IRS agent who swindles them out of their millions, mad investments, Ham's venture into movie-making, and a dozen other twists and turns equalled at the time for length and complexity only by the goings-on in Sidney Smith's daily *Gumps* strip.

LEFT: **The very first *Thimble Theatre*. From the *N.Y. Journal*, Dec. 19, 1919.**

BELOW: ***Thimble Theatre*'s first superhero was a game cock, Blizzard by name.**

THE THIMBLE THEATRE
UNCLE BEN ZENE SENT CASTOR A GAME COCK FROM SOUTH AMERICA- HE A PRIZE FIGHTIN' CHICKEN—
AND HIS NAME IS BLIZZARD
NO ROOSTER CAN PICK ME ON THE HEAD LIKE HE DID YESTERDAY AND GET AWAY WITH IT
I'LL MAKE DUCK SOUP OUT OF HIM
WHACK
COCK A DOODLE COCK A DOODLE COCK A DOODLE DOOOOO
!
Copyright 1921 by King Features Syndicate, Inc.
9-15
SEGAR

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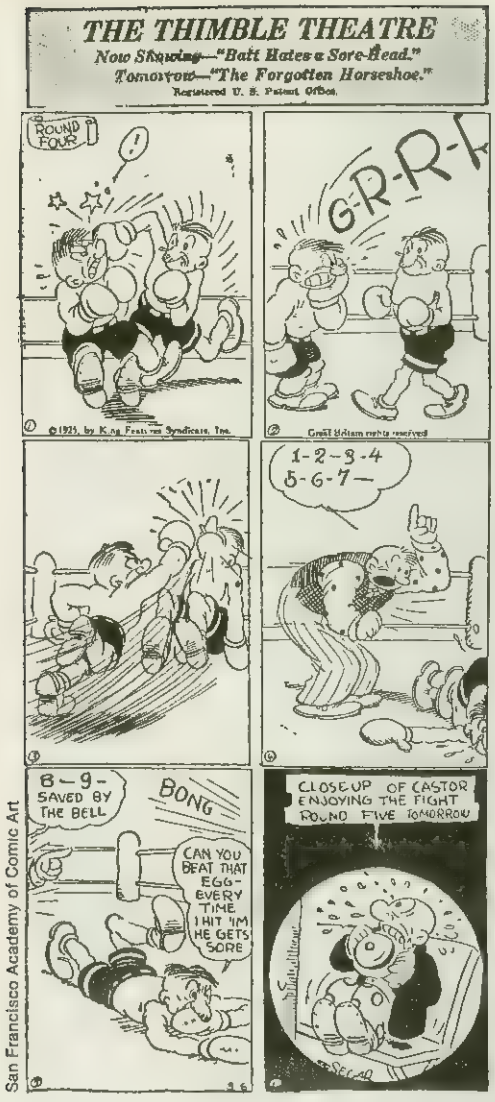

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ABOVE: Battling McGnat, with just the hint of a pop-eye, makes his manager, Castor Oyl, a bit edgy.

BELOW: Mayhem, sometimes more violent than silly, was always an integral part of *Thimble Theater* under Segar.

Thimble Theatre readers, used to the saga from 1929 forward, know damned well what to expect when a strange box arrives from exotic parts addressed to a main character. The Wiffle Hen, which brought Castor, Olive, and Ham together with Popeye in 1929, showed up in a mysterious box. So, a while later, did Popeye's "infink son," Swee' Pea. And perhaps best known of all to fans today is the classic arrival of the Jeep in a box from Africa in 1936. But Castor's box from his Uncle Ben Zene in South America was the first such mystery-crate ever delivered in the strip, and the readers of 1923 must have been both surprised and intrigued. When Castor approaches the oblong wooden crate with its array of air holes, hatchet in hand to open it, the box suddenly erupts with a grisly cacophony of screeches: "Wauk, blop, wurk, wockle, urk!" Startled, Castor rushes off to gather as many neighbors as possible, all armed with household weapons, to stand by when the top boards are levered off the screaming crate. One is pried off—more racket—then two, and the furious passenger from South America exits the box in a huge bound, gabbling "cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle DOOOOO!!" The occupant is a gigantic rooster, almost as large as Castor, with spurred heels, tiny but active wings, and a ribbon tied in a bow around its thick neck. Uncle Ben Zene's letter (enclosed, madly, *with* the bird) explains all: "Dear Castor, I'm sending you a game cock. His name is Blizzard. He's a prize-fighting fool."

Uncle Ben Zene's last comment wrapped it up. Blizzard was rough and tough and ready to tackle any fowl on two feet, webbed or spurred. The huge game cock was the first of Segar's larger-than-life fantasy animals—and just *how* fantastic Blizzard was to be emerged powerfully within the first three days of the rooster's arrival. Castor (unique among strip heroes of the time as unabashedly cheap and crummy in all situations) gives Blizzard a kick on the second day of his arrival and snarls, "You may have a fancy name and all that, but you're just chicken fricassee to me—I'll get the ax." Blizzard unleashes some choice rooster profanity at this and stares balefully at Castor's departing back, then makes a monumental leap straight up to deliver a vicious peck to the top of Castor's bald head. "Well, I'll *be*—" Castor growls in disbelief as he wheels to glare at Blizzard, who meets him eye to eye with a belligerent "*Wockle!*" In four fast, brutal panels, we have learned that Blizzard will take no nonsense—and that he *understands* spoken English. But two days later we discover even more, realizing for the first time that we are inarguably in the presence of the imaginative creator who was to give us Popeye six years later. For on September 15, Castor has decided to clear the decks and directly dispose of the obnoxious bird his crazy uncle has sent. Hatchet in hand, a lump still visible on his head from the rooster's peck, Castor grabs Blizzard by both feet and slaps him across a stump in the yard. "I'll make duck soup of him," he sneers as he raises the little ax, producing a horrific WHACK which fills the whole of the following panel. But behold: In the last panel, Castor is shown staring with stunned amazement at a hatchet with a sizable chunk out of its blade, while perched on the stump in front of him, unharmed, Blizzard once more triumphantly croons, "Cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle DOO-OOO!"

We are in the unmistakable position of meeting a new superhero—a bird, certainly, but one with super resistance and super intelligence. Not completely novel in comics, to be sure—there was the stupendously strong and indestructible superhero of the 1903 Chicago *Tribune* Sunday comics, and there was Fontaine Fox's Powerful Katrinka—but still a substantial innovation. Certainly, Blizzard was the first super animal of any kind in the comics, and the first strip hero, animal or human, to demonstrate prowess in the prize fighting ring. For it was Segar's delightful whimsy to match Blizzard with other fighting fowls in a formal boxing arena, complete with ropes, canvas, corner stools, and a human referee. (It is clear that Segar wanted no part of the grubby atmosphere of actual cock fights, with their dirt pits and murderous bloodshed—he simply liked comic animals and boxing, and the notion to combine the two was uniquely his.) And Blizzard (reconciled with his purse-hungry manager, Castor) was to flap into his first match immediately.

His initial opponent was a gigantic cock named Dynamite, twice Blizzard's size. (At the very outset of this episode, we find the introduction of the theme of the shrimp fighter, comparatively speaking, tackling much bigger bruisers in the ring.) We see both birds working out with barbells, doing road work, ferociously ripping at posters of their opponent on sight and knocking the blazes out of sparring (or should we say, spurring) partners.

THE THIMBLE THEATRE
Registered U. S. Patent Office.
Now Showing—"Getting Their Money's Worth."
Monday—"On With the Battle."
YOU REMEMBER PEDRO SOCKED CASTOR BECAUSE BLIZZARD WAS DOING TOO WELL- THEN OLIVEOYL SOCKED PEDRO FOR SOCKING CASTOR- THE CHIEF OF POLICE SOCKED OLIVEOYL FOR SOCKING PEDRO- HAMGRAVY SOCKED THE CHIEF FOR SOCKING OLIVEOYL AND THE MAYOR SOCKED HAM FOR SOCKING THE CHIEF-
AND THEY'RE STILL SOCKING!
SOCK!
THE SPIRIT OF BATTLE GRIPS THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE AND FIVE THOUSAND HEALTHY MEXICANS MIX IT IN A BEAUTIFUL "FREE FOR ALL"
WOCKLE!

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It would all be very familiar to old Segar fans of the '30s, and the great fight even more so. Blizzard depends on his super-resistance to simply stand quietly in the ring while the ferocious Dynamite leaps and pecks frantically at him—15 times he is pecked on the head, 47 times, 93, as the rounds roll on (and Castor sweats fearfully in the ringside). Unphased, Blizzard waits his opponent out, until the exhausted Dynamite sinks to the canvas, then—*then* he makes his one fearful, finishing leap into the air, to peck Dynamite into unconciousness with a single blow. Smugly, Blizzard takes his deserved bows as spectator hats fly in the air and the huzzahs resound.

This match was only the first of many—in fact, Segar's Blizzard story proves to be one of the longest running epics in the slambang history of *Thimble Theatre*. Climaxing months later with a ferocious encounter between Blizzard and the Mexican champ, Hugo (in which Ham, Olive, and Castor mix it up in the ring with the referee, the local chief of police and mayor, and assorted patrons in a grand free-for-all), the gamecock saga finally wound down on July 7, 1924—but only after Blizzard has been eaten by a crocodile and carried under miles of tropical waters in its belly, to walk nonchalantly out of its propped-open jaws days later and meet a perfectly lovely Mexican chicken. They fell in instant love for a deliriously happy ending.

THE THIMBLE THEATRE
Now Showing—"Shivering Timber."
Tomorrow—"A Scratched Contender."
HOLY SMOKE! AN EARTH QUAKE"
HEAVENS THE HOUSE IS SHAKING LIKE A LEAF
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!!
EARTH QUAKE ME BYE-
IT'S ONLY HOGAN SCRATCHING HIS BACK ON THE CORNER OF THE HOUSE
SEGAR
4-32
San Francisco Academy of Comic Art

Not that Blizzard leaves the strip with his love, as the Wiffle Hen did a few years later in a similar idyllic affair: He remains as Castor's close buddy—having made him millions—parading around in the background and muttering, "Wockle!" from time to time as the strip's *personae* pursue fresh plot lines. Eventually, he fades from sight, about the time in 1925 when Segar trots the first of two human prize fighters on stage. Returning from a wild, knockabout adventure in Alaska on Jan. 10, 1925, Castor meets a boxing promoter friend named Duffy who says, "Castor, you've been very successful with your chicken fights—why don't you get in the prize fight game?" Castor shows interest, so Duffy sells him the management of a Castor-sized shrimp boxer named Battling McGnat, the flyweight champ of Jersey City. "Did you ever hear about what I did to Wildcat O'Conner?" McGnat asks Castor as he shakes his hand, and while Castor signs the requisite papers, McGnat trots around in the background, shadow-boxing, and continuing with his account: "Then I steps in and uppercuts 'im on the button—"

McGnat is Segar's second shrimp powerhouse of the ring (who is, however, anything but super intelligent: he monomaniacally asks all comers if they ever heard "about what I did to Wildcat O'Conner?"); but he proves a total canvasback contrast to the triumphant Blizzard. Nicknamed Batt (although Castor's co-manager and investor, a Mr. Mint, called him "The Great McGnat" with bubbling but deluded enthusiasm), Castor's boxer is disastrously incompetent. He not only is unable to knock down his own sparring partners, he can't even make them flinch. Finding his sizable ego failing him once he glimpses his opponent in the coming match (another bantam slugger, Kid Flynn), The Great McGnat flubs the fight by running out of the ring ducking every blow thrown. To crown his ignominy, McGnat then meets the not-at-all mythical Wildcat O'Conner himself, who slugs him silly for sullying his reputation: McGnat, it seems, never did *anything* to the Wildcat.

But Castor has tasted the excitment of the squared circle; although he has literally lost his shirt (plus all the other clothes on his back) in betting on McGnat, he still wants to manage a winner. Sitting in the woods brooding (it is interesting how bucolic the background often remains in *Thimble Theatre* even at this comparatively late period), Castor decides he wants no more of flyweight fighters; he'd like to produce a *heavyweight* champ. Strolling along after making this cloud-cuckoo-land decision, he stops in his tracks, eyes bugging at what he sees. "Oh, *boy*!" he murmurs in delighted disbelief. The gods have been good to Castor. Ahead of him in a clearing, holding an entire tree he has just chopped down under one arm, is an immense man the size of Segar's later Toar—but a man with a face almost identical to that of Popeye's. It is March

THE THIMBLE THEATRE
Now Showing—"First Class Service."
Tomorrow—"Fellow Master."
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO HOGAN? I CAN'T FIND ANY SPARRING PARTNERS FOR YOU- THEY'RE ALL AFRAID!
LEAVE IT TO ME BOSS I'LL GET SOME SPARRING PARTNERS
HELLO CHIEF OF POLICE. SEND UP THE WHOLE FORCE THERE'S GOING TO BE A BIG FIGHT AT 999 HOKUM AVE
HURRY, MEN!
NOW LOCK THE DOOR CASTOR, SO THEY CAN'T GET OUT
4-24
SEGAR
San Francisco Academy of Comic Art

ABOVE AND LEFT: Another pop-eyed strongman-type—the mighty Hogan visits the Oyls.

31, 1925, and Castor has just met the gigantic Hogan—the *first* super strong human being in *Thimble Theatre*. "Say—would you like to learn how to fight?" Castor asks tentatively. "*Learn* how to fight?" Hogan asks derisively. "Say—I can knock the socks offa any guy livin'."

But this ability proves to be almost the least of Hogan's amazing capacities. In the course of working with Castor and Ham toward the glittering heavyweight career Castor envisions, Hogan casually crushes rocks to powder, drags cops trying to arrest him around by the handcuffs, totes horses over one shoulder, almost knocks Olive's house down by scratching his back against an outside corner, uses a police riot squad for sparring partners, snaps chains routinely, and lifts a professional strong man off the floor together with the fellow's thousand-pound dumbbells—all exactly as Popeye was to do so often in later years. (These comic turns go on, in fact, for several weeks—yet the very stunts which proved to nationally popular when performed by Popeye apparently made no particular stir when published coast to coast in 1925.) Hogan's ring career, of course, is as fabulously successful as poor McGnat's was disastrous. He takes the state championship in a walkaway, and is in training for the world's title, when—once again—Castor's ballooning hopes are dashed. Almost overnight Hogan marries one of his doting ringside fans, and takes her proudly in to meet Castor and Ham. "Folks, meet the wife," he announces. "We

Popeye and the Depression

Popeye first appeared in Elzie C. Segar's comic strip *Thimble Theatre*. The first Popeye story dealt with a get-rich-quick scheme, which many people in the Roaring Twenties were trying in real life as well as in the comics. The outcome of the story coincidentally reflected precisely what really occurred in late 1929.

Thimble Theatre had begun in late 1919 as a take-off on stage melodramas. The format shifted to gags by 1920 and soon used continued stories in daily punchlined episodes. Castor Oyl was the main protagonist of *Thimble Theatre* and he attempted various schemes to get rich quick. Castor's sister Olive Oyl went along with her brother's plans as much as possible, and her boyfriend Ham Gravy also played a part in Castor's schemes. Castor and Olive's parents, Cole Oyl and Nana Oyl, would look on and sigh.

The plan Castor had in early 1929 was to sail to Dice Island, a gambling haven in the Pacific, and clean out the gamblers. Castor had a good luck charm, the magic Wiffle Hen, which granted good luck to whoever rubbed the feathers on its head. Castor bought a ship, the Tomcod, and made himself captain; Ham Gravy was first mate, and Olive was a stowaway. The one-man crew Castor hired on January 17 was Popeye, who grew more prominent as the story went on, not only sailing Castor's ship, but saving their lives from Jack Snork, who'd wanted to steal all the money Castor had won on Dice Island.

In early 1929 things were looking bright for America's economy. People were taking dares with money just as Castor had done when he'd used his Wiffle Hen and $10,000 to win over $30 million on Dice Island.

After they returned home, Castor gave Popeye a million dollars out of gratitude. Popeye gave the money away later to a girl whose father was sick. (At least that's what Popeye said. He might have blown it all shooting dice on the docks!)

Castor and Olive invested their money in what they thought was a good deal. They gave all their money to the investment firm of Glibb & Blabber. In return, they received 100 acres of land in the center of which (according to Mr. Blabber) was a valuable brass mine.

Castor and Popeye went down to Beezark Falls to see their brass mine. All they saw was a farm. They met the Weedles, who lived on the farm, and who, like everyone else Castor had asked, had never heard of any brass mine. Castor began to doubt the value of his purchase.

"Why don't you ask Mr. Weedle if there's a brass mine on this land?" Popeye asked Castor.

"I'm through asking that question, Popeye," replied Castor. He went to the farmer and asked, "Have you a dictionary, Mr. Weedle?"

"Yeah," Mr. Weedle replied, "But the kids worked on it till there's nothing left but the Bs."

"That's OK," said Castor, "The word I want begins with B."

"I'll get it," said Mr. Weedle, and he handed Castor the dictionary. Castor looked up the word Brass, defined as an alloy of copper and zinc.

"Well, I'll be—!" said Castor as the truth dawned on him. "Popeye—can you imagine my embarrassment. There ain't no such things as brass mines."

"There ain't?"

"Brass is made from cooper and zinc."

"Well, blow me down!"

The same day the above dialogue was in *Thimble Theatre* was a day when many other people were realizing they'd made bad investments. That day, October 29, as much as $74,000,000,000.00 was wiped out in a panic selling on Wall Street. The sum represented the life savings of millions of people as well as the resources of thousands of businesses. The capital base of the national economy nearly disappeared that day, which historians have dubbed Black Tuesday. Whoever read *Thimble Theatre* that day probably laughed bitterly seeing that Castor Oyl had lost all his money in a foolish investment.

Nervous depositors lined up to withdraw their savings, only to find that the banks had also been investing in stock and had no money to give the people. By the end of that year hundreds of banks had closed as the economy itself collapsed. Food and shelter became objects of everyday struggle.

Castor and Popeye went on a long sea voyage in late 1929 and early 1930. They got as far as Africa, where the Wiffle Hen left Castor to stay with a Wiffle Rooster. By this time Popeye had become Castor's companion and Olive's boyfriend. Ham Gravy had left the Oyls (and the strip) and reappeared no more. By the end of 1930, Popeye was the star of the strip.

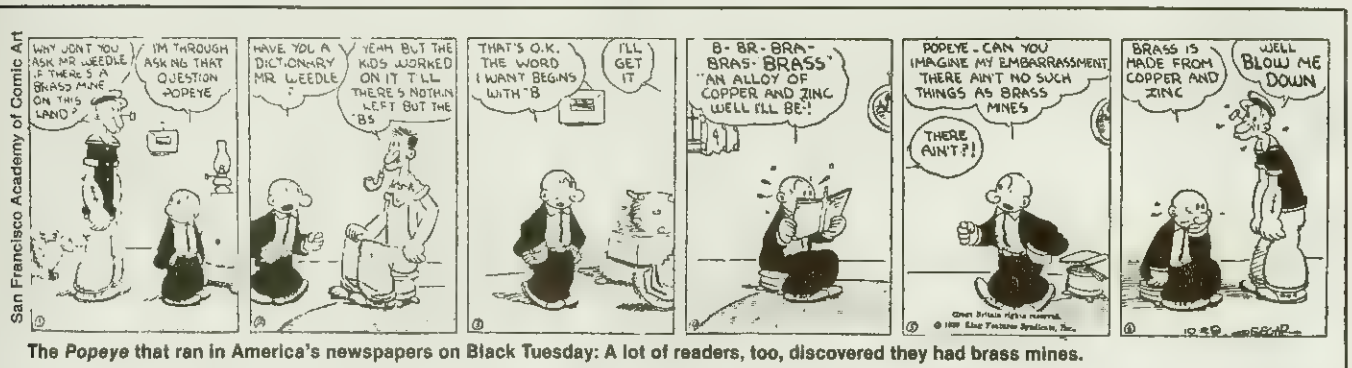
Popeye's growing popularity resulted in widespread distribution for *Thimble Theatre* and a high salary for Segar, who was thus spared the actual sufferings of the Depression. Yet Segar was aware of how most people in the country were struggling to make ends meet. Popeye became Segar's tool for showing how hard times could be overcome.

In the 1930 *Thimble Theatre* Sunday Pages Castor tried to make a prize-fighter out of Popeye, whose first fights he technically lost because he did not obey the rules. Castor tried managing Kid Sledge, who was financed by Mr. Kliph. Kid Sledge was officially beaten in the ring by Popeye, who had learned about fight-rules.

Then Castor and Popeye solved a mystery for Mr. Kliph. They discovered that Dr. Wattly was using an electrical force to keep all intruders away from the Brownstone Mansion. Castor and Popeye solved another case discovering that a butler named Pemberly was trying to kill his master. With the combined reward money Castor opened up his own detective agency. He settled down as a detective and tried no more schemes to get rich quick. The monetary risk-taking of the '20s were as bitter a memory to Castor as they were to most Americans.

just got hitched." His new wife nods dreamily. "And sugar lump," she says, "promised to give up prize fighting, didn't you, sugar lump?"

Sugar lump, it seems, had done just that. The mighty Hogan left the strip then and there, never to return. Unlike Blizzard's fighting career, Hogan's occupied a bare six weeks of *Thimble Theatre* continuity. Segar himself had apparently not been particularly taken with the super-powerful battler, and in fact about all Hogan did have going for him—aside from the curious anticipation of Popeye's physiognomy—was his ability to perform staggering feats of strength. Even had Segar thought at this earlier date to combine Hogan's fantastic power with McGnat's diminutive size in one prize fighter for greater comic effect (as he did in making the scrawny Popeye so strong), it is doubtful that the public of 1925 would have been much more engaged by such a figure than they were with Hogan *per se*. What really made Popeye an engrossing character for the largely adult readership of the Hearst afternoon papers where *Thimble Theatre* ran was not so much his strength or resistance to violent attack, but rather his bizarrely engaging *persona*: his marvelous language, cocky sailor demeanor, and even the battered visage (with squinting eye and tilted pipe) on the pipestem body, so unlike anything else in the comics. Too, for the early readers, there was the adroit manner in which Segar developed his salty hero in stages of


WHY DON'T YOU ASK MR WEEDLE IF THERE'S A BRASS MINE ON THIS LAND?
I'M THROUGH ASKING THAT QUESTION POPEYE
HAVE YOU A DICTIONARY MR WEEDLE
YEAH BUT THE KIDS WORKED ON IT TILL THERE'S NOTHIN LEFT BUT THE "B"S
THAT'S O.K. THE WORD I WANT BEGINS WITH "B"
I'LL GET IT
B-BR-BRA-BRAS-BRASS "AN ALLOY OF COPPER AND ZINC WELL I'LL BE!
POPEYE - CAN YOU IMAGINE MY EMBARRASSMENT THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THINGS AS BRASS MINES
THERE AIN'T?!
BRASS IS MADE FROM COPPER AND ZINC
WELL BLOW ME DOWN
San Francisco Academy of Comic Art

The *Popeye* that ran in America's newspapers on Black Tuesday: A lot of readers, too, discovered they had brass mines.

All over the country, people who couldn't pay their mortgages were forced from home and took to living in shantytowns that sprang up on the outskirts of every city. They were called Hoovervilles in a sarcastic reference to President Hoover.

In early 1931, Popeye and Castor were rewarded handsomely after helping capture Western Outlaw Glint Gore. Popeye decided to be "liberous" with his money. (Generous + liberal = liberous.)

"Castor," said Popeye, "I has $50,000 which I doesn' know how ta use. All I need is smokin' tobacker an' a place ta sleep. Ya knows I got a liberous heart an' the thing I likes best, nex'ta sockin' a emeny is helpin' poor folks. Anybody kin cash checks when they got money inna bank, but when they ain't tha's different. I got a ideay.

"I wants ta open a bank which does only one thing—pays money out. Folks don't hafta put nothin' in—they jus' takes it out. Tha's all they is to it. Write a check an' have meat on the table."

"Sort of a One-Way Bank, eh?" asked Castor.

"The One-Way Bank," repeated Popeye, "Blow me down! Tha's a good ideal Will ya help me, Castor?"

"I'll be glad to," said Castor, "Provided we use your money!"

In the real world people were in contempt of banks. Many banks had failed, leaving their depositors penniless. Many poor people would be grateful for a One-Way Bank like Popeye's.

On April 11, Popeye was confronted by a banker who asked what good Popeye would possibly get for giving out money to the needy and asking for no interest or payback. Popeye replied:

"When you dies an' goes up to them Golden Gates they's gonner be lotsa questions asked—but when I goes up Saint Peter will say, "STEP ASIDE, YA SWABS! HERE COMES POPEYE!"

The One-Way Bank did good business. Castor tried to keep the bank going by limiting the amounts that could be withdrawn, but Popeye would give larger amounts to some customers—particularly beautiful brunettes. Popeye had a weakness for lovely women telling sob-stories.

A jealous Olive Oyl angrily said to Popeye, "So you're that sort of an egg, are you? Well, what do you have to say for yourself?"

"I ain't got absolukely nothin' to say," Popeye replied, "Because I yam what I yam an' tha's all I yam!" A classic statement of self-assertion.

In 1935, Popeye discovered an island continent which he dubbed Spinachovia. Thousands of people settled in Spinachovia and Popeye appointed himself "diktipater." He would make speeches from his palace balcony.

"I gived ya freedom—I gived ya liberky—an' I gived ya laws ta break. You boys er the greatest guys on Earth. I yamma great diktipater. I wantcha ta have faith in me. I ain't only gonner give ya a new deal, I yam gonner give ya a whole blasted new game."

Popeye was dictator of Spinachovia until the people demanded a republic. Popeye went along with the demand and made himself President instead of dictator, replacing his crown with a top hat.

Soon afterwards, Popeye began a series of chats on the radio which were similar to the fireside chats President Roosevelt had.

"You boys er salts of the Earth—Yer the swellest people which ever got borned... Blow me down! I guess that oughta make them dumbheads love me... Oops! Disregards the las' statement. I thought the microphone was off!"

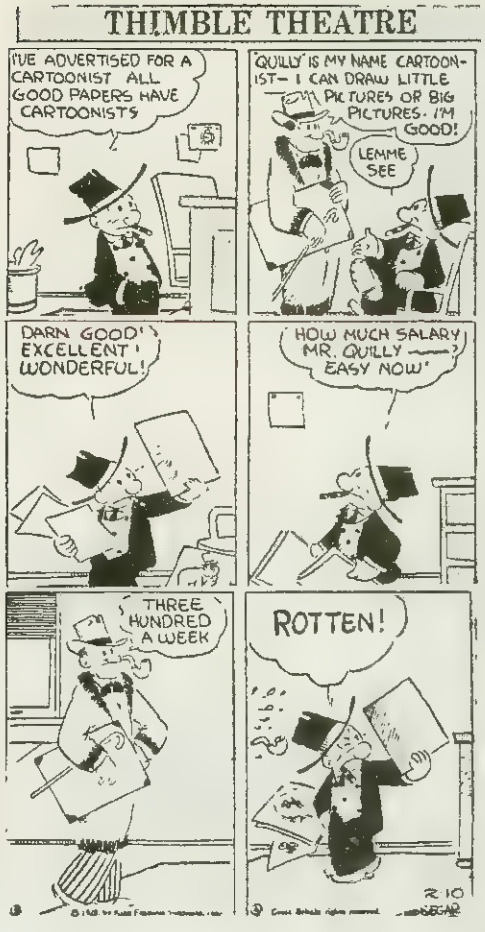
When there was a threat of war between Spinachovia and Brutia, Popeye trained a group of reserve soldiers to fight their best by daily exercise and spinach-rations. However, Popeye did the real fighting which brought the war to an end.

Popeye snuck into the enemy general's tent, knocked him out, and painted an expression on the unconscious general's face. Popeye hid behind the general and gave orders to the next soldier who came in. The soldiers were ordered to lay down their guns and pick flowers.

When Brutia's soldiers were defenseless, Spinachovia's soldiers stormed in and captured them. Thus Popeye had won the war for Spinachovia without firing a shot. Popeye then resigned as leader of Spinachovia.

Thimble Theatre—starring Popeye—was as topical as any strip during the '30s. No matter how bizarre the situation, it reflected the issues of the time. Segar always used good humor in his strip so no one felt he was editorializing. After Segar's death in 1938 his formula—and genius—vanished.

—Richard Ranke


THIMBLE THEATRE
I'VE ADVERTISED FOR A CARTOONIST ALL GOOD PAPERS HAVE CARTOONISTS
QUILLY IS MY NAME CARTOONIST— I CAN DRAW LITTLE PICTURES OR BIG PICTURES. I'M GOOD!
LEMME SEE
DARN GOOD! EXCELLENT! WONDERFUL!
HOW MUCH SALARY MR. QUILLY — ? EASY NOW!
THREE HUNDRED A WEEK
ROTTEN!

San Francisco Academy of Comic Art

Castor Oyl hires a comic artist for the first time. (Sequence continues on page 18).

gradual and continually surprising revelations through a long and suspenseful melodrama of many months' duration. Finally, unlike Hogan (but very like Blizzard), Popeye had brains and could take effective command of almost any situation (being deterred only by problems substantially involving forceful women).

He was, in sum, the almost perfectly realized comic hero: superbly funny to look at and follow in even his most common actions (as were W. C. Fields and Groucho Marx), yet genuinely admirable in most of his principles and goals. Such a character is not common, and the accidental development of certain of Popeye's less essential aspects in the earlier Segar work, although remarkable for its curiosity value, does not in the least suggest that the cartoonist missed an opportunity to enjoy his later fame by some oversight or other in 1923 or 1925.

It may be argued that Segar did, however, fail to see the possibilities for comic expansion in his first King Blozo/Nazilla sequence of 1925. Ham Gravy, it seems, is the 15th in line to the throne of Nasalia (as the island kingdom was first called), a cousin of King Blozo, who wants to abdicate the throne. Threatened and almost killed a number of times by the black-suited agents of the heir who is 16th in line (and who has disposed of the 14 who were in line before Ham), Ham sails with Olive and Castor to the island to see what's going on—to discover that a large number of Nasalian inhabitants have noses as large or larger than his own, that the country derives its name from the—er—nosiness of its populace, and that he has finally found a place where his proboscis makes him handsome, rather than an object of derision. Unfortunately, the story is wound up remarkably soon (for an exotic Segar adventure story of this period), and it will not be until 1931, when Popeye and his gang—then minus Ham—visit Blozo and Nazilla on a new enterprise, that Segar lets the reader enjoy the oddities of Blozo (the comic strips' first comic strip fanatic) and his kingdom at considerable length. (In the later adventure, of course—the *long-running Thimble Theatre* gag of Ham's long nose having finally been abandoned with the character himself—the Nazilians are normally nosed for the most part, while it appears that Segar was sufficiently amused by the aural resemblance of his first name for the Blozo kingdom to that of the then newly publicized Hitler group in Germany to make a couple of minor changes in its original spelling for its 1931 use. It must be remembered that in most of the U.S. press of 1931 the Nazis were treated as low comedy news from Europe, and Segar saw their name in that light.)

Thimble Theatre had been something of an elite attraction to comic strip readers almost from its inception, a position it shared in the 1920s with *Krazy Kat*, *The Bungle Family*, and *Moon Mullins*. Unlike the last two of those strips, however, Segar's features lacked a single strong central figure that effectively represented the strip to its readers; it was closer to *Krazy Kat*, with its inseparable triumvirate of Krazy, Ignatz, and Offisa Pupp: Segar's Ham, Olive, and Castor inter-relating on much the same order. Even so, there had been some changes in focus over the decade. Ham and Olive had been the primary team for the first few years, with Castor an increasingly featured secondary figure, but by 1925, it was apparent that Castor was the strip's nominal lead, with Ham and Olive somewhat secondary in their function. (When Blizzard was featured, Castor and the gamecock carried the action for weeks at a time by themselves.) Castor's amoral view of life—at one point in the strip, he turned to crime as routinely as he undertook a detective career earlier—and the black humor that this attitude generated amused a sophisticated audience, but did little to enhance Castor's fundamental appeal as a character. Generally speaking, *Thimble Theatre* in the 1920s was relished more for its mood, fast comic movement, and occasional bizarre characters, such as Blizzard or Battling McGnat, than for its lead characters in themselves.

All that, of course, changed completely when one of Segar's long string of oddball characters—Popeye—literally took over the strip after his stunning appearance in 1929. Popeye—and the increased vistas of narrative imagination his development seemed to open for Segar—attracted readers the comics in general had never had before. Among these was a noted writer of brutally realistic adventure and action fiction along the line of Jack London and Robert E. Howard, named Norton S. Parker, who had written such widely read books of the 1920s as *Crimson Dawn*, *The Earth Woman*, and *Heli-Ship Bronson* (the latter having been filmed in 1928). Parker had been deeply impressed by Popeye and the story in which Segar had involved him, visited Segar in his Santa Monica home around November, 1929, and learned of Segar's newly developed character, the Sea Hag. This grim apparition appealed even more forcefully to Parker's lurid imagination, and his response kindled Segar's suggestion that the two of them collaborate on a novel about both Popeye and the Sea Hag. Six months in the plotting and writing (turned out while Segar was developing his independent Sea Hag story in the daily strip) and completed in May, 1930—about the point at which my Hyperion Press Popeye reprint collection closes—the Segar-Parker novel was titled simply *The Sea Hag* and ran to some 191 pages of double-spaced typed manuscript.

The text of the manuscript leaves no doubt of the kicks Segar and Parker enjoyed in writing the book, but its completion left them facing the problems they had both known they would have to meet evenutally—the complete King Features control of the *Thimble Theatre* characters and their commercial use. To meet this head on, Segar wrote a letter on May 29, 1930, to J.V. Connolly, president of King. Only the original hand-written draft of this letter survives (although possibly the typed, final version sent to Connolly is congealed somewhere in the bottomless files of King Features' correspondence and business), sprightly and hopeful in Segar's familiar balloon-lettering style, amid its many emendations and crossings-out. Dated from Segar's home at 350 17th St., Santa Monica, it reads (in part):

"Dear Connolly—

"Last November a writer friend of mine, Mr. Norton S. Parker, told me that he could see much drama in the series I had started—'The Sea Hag (story)'—and that he'd like to run across a similar (conception). So I says, 'You can use the Sea Hag (herself) if you'll write a story

using my characters as the heroes, villains, etc.' And he says, 'Okay!' So we dug up some of *Thimble Theatre*'s old characters and went to it.

"The idea appealed to us because of its originality—imagine a novel using comic characters—and man! she's fast—thrills, sobs, humor—good old spontaneous humor—and lots of it! Anyone reading the first sentence will finish the book...

"All this may be out of order and I suppose we had no right to go on with it without consulting you—but we figured that you might underestimate our ability and that you might say, 'No.' So we just went ahead, realizing all the time that it was a gamble and that you might not want it published... (But think of this): if every editor in the U.S. had a copy of *The Sea Hag* (sent gratis)—h-m-m, just think of the customers for our nice little comic strip...

"And now I'm asking you—will you give us the permission to publish... and allow us all financial gain derived in the form of royalties?... You can have the publicity... I feel that this is something entirely new in the fiction field and that it will hit!

"Regards, Segar."

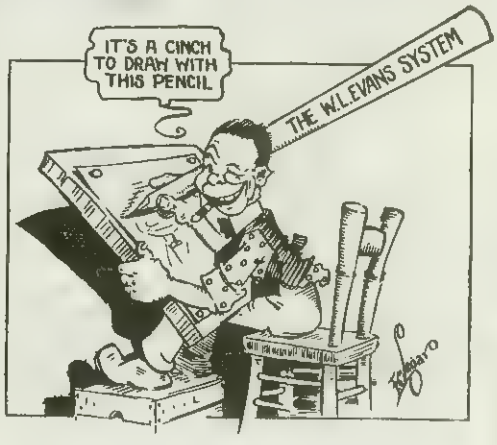
The prose of the novel itself is a curious but effective amalgam of satiric overstatement (in which lurid atmospherics are often laid on with a trowel) and genuine pursuit of the very real suspense and character conflict endemic to the Segar and Parker story line itself; it is, in short, a delightful parallel, in prose rubrics, to the quality of *Thimble Theatre* itself. The opening of the book, including the somewhat Joycean first sentence glowingly cited by Segar, gives the flavor:

> **Singapore—oriental clearing house for romance and adventure—brooding port of the South China Sea—melting pot of many races—filthy, unlovely in the blaze of the tropical sun, yet alluring in the exquisite mystery of its sweltering nights—port of call for merchantman and junk, liner and tramp—dumping ground of the scum of the Seven Seas—rendezvous of gentleman and rogue—strange men who come from nowhere to tarry a while and drift back into oblivion.**
>
> **At the end of a crooked street near the waterfront, Siam Sam's Place had stood for many years, a notorious dive frequented by men of the sea, adventurers, murderers, wanted men, human derelicts of every race and tongue. At a small table in an obscure corner of the ill-lit, smoke-filled room, a lone little figure was seated, his cap pulled**

Segar, Student and Teacher

The 'teens was a time of proliferating cartoon schools, most of them operated with the co-operation of the U.S. Postal System. The Correspondence School was an inexpensive way to learn fundamentals and have some tenuous contact with the greats in the field. (Many cartoonists were listed as "advisors" to courses such as the Landon Course, the W.L. Evans School, and the Federal School.) Many—perhaps a majority of the next generation of cartoonists—took these courses. Young E.C. Segar did, and was quick to draw himself presenting such a recommendation (*left*); even his mother got into the act (*below*)! Such were the times that even marginally successful cartoonists established their own courses; *below left* is an ad drawn in Segar's deBeck-period style hawking his own 25¢-each criticisms.

—REM



DON'T TEAR UP YOUR

CARTOONS!!

SEGAR, cartoonist on the CHICAGO HERALD, has made arrangements to criticise — students' cartoons — four for one dollar (cash or money order)—make original drawings when necessary, etc.

Let him see your work —send some of your cartoons in NOW and get a professional cartoonist's criticism.

Money refunded if not satisfied.

E. C. SEGAR, 163 W. Washington St., Chicago, Ill.

The course of instruction in *cartoon* and *comic drawing* which we have to offer has been proven *practical* and *reliable*. It is *recommended by well-known cartoonists* whose work you have often seen reproduced in this publication. They recommend the course, because they know our students are given the kind of instruction which they need.

Here's what a mother recently wrote us:

"You will no doubt be surprised to get a letter from the mother of your student, E. C. Segar, but believe it will be all right, as we are mutually interested in him. The boy's father and myself wish to thank you very much for the kind and genuine interest you have taken in him from the beginning, and we think his *progress has been wonderful* under your teaching, and the three of us agree that *The W. L. Evans course of instruction cannot be beat anywhere or by anybody.*"

E. C. Segar is now drawing "Charlie Chaplin's Comic Capers" for the *Chicago Herald*. He says:

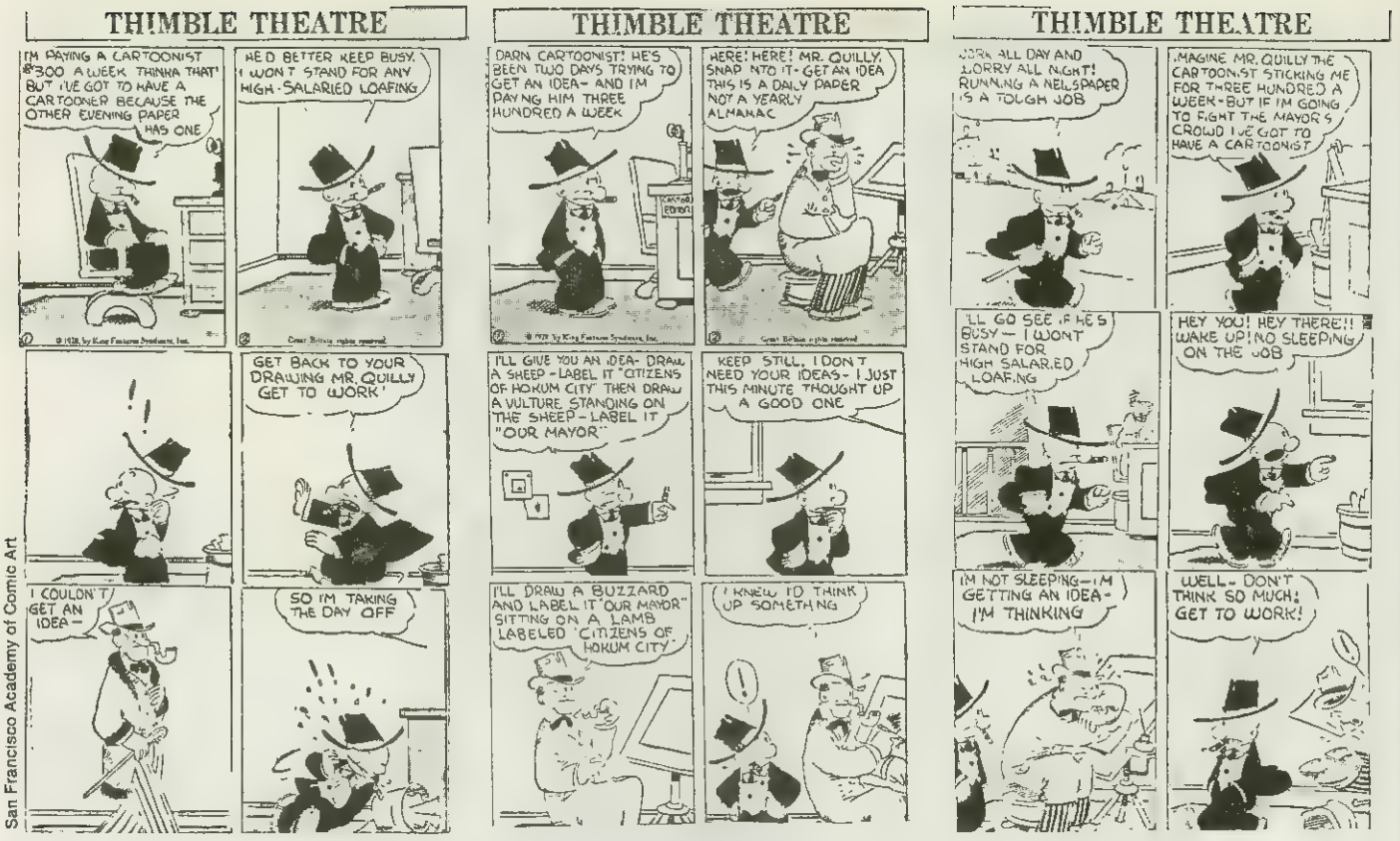
"Your course and frank criticisms have put me in shape to fill this good position. I draw a strip every day and a full page for the comic section each Sunday."

We have letters from other parents, and also from other pupils who are now drawing for publication. Our lessons will not interfere with his work. We simply ask that your son devote the same time to our lessons that he is now spending in merely amusing himself by drawing "funny pictures." He will be *accomplishing something from his amusement*. Let us send you full details. Mail us a small sample of his work.

THE W. L. EVANS SCHOOL OF CARTOONING

"The school that has the reputation." 822 Leader Bldg., CLEVELAND, O.

All art from collection of Rick Marschall


THIMBLE THEATRE
I'M PAYING A CARTOONIST $300 A WEEK THINKA THAT' BUT I'VE GOT TO HAVE A CARTOONER BECAUSE THE OTHER EVENING PAPER HAS ONE
HE'D BETTER KEEP BUSY. I WON'T STAND FOR ANY HIGH-SALARIED LOAFING
GET BACK TO YOUR DRAWING MR. QUILLY GET TO WORK!
I COULDN'T GET AN IDEA—
SO I'M TAKING THE DAY OFF
THIMBLE THEATRE
DARN CARTOONIST! HE'S BEEN TWO DAYS TRYING TO GET AN IDEA- AND I'M PAYING HIM THREE HUNDRED A WEEK
HERE! HERE! MR. QUILLY, SNAP INTO IT- GET AN IDEA THIS IS A DAILY PAPER NOT A YEARLY ALMANAC
I'LL GIVE YOU AN IDEA- DRAW A SHEEP - LABEL IT "CITIZENS OF HOKUM CITY" THEN DRAW A VULTURE STANDING ON THE SHEEP - LABEL IT "OUR MAYOR"
KEEP STILL, I DON'T NEED YOUR IDEAS- I JUST THIS MINUTE THOUGHT UP A GOOD ONE
I'LL DRAW A BUZZARD AND LABEL IT "OUR MAYOR" SITTING ON A LAMB LABELED "CITIZENS OF HOKUM CITY"
I KNEW I'D THINK UP SOMETHING
THIMBLE THEATRE
WORK ALL DAY AND WORRY ALL NIGHT! RUNNING A NEWSPAPER IS A TOUGH JOB
IMAGINE MR. QUILLY THE CARTOONIST STICKING ME FOR THREE HUNDRED A WEEK - BUT IF I'M GOING TO FIGHT THE MAYOR'S CROWD I'VE GOT TO HAVE A CARTOONIST
I'LL GO SEE IF HE'S BUSY — I WON'T STAND FOR HIGH SALARIED LOAFING
HEY YOU! HEY THERE!! WAKE UP! NO SLEEPING ON THE JOB
I'M NOT SLEEPING—I'M GETTING AN IDEA- I'M THINKING
WELL- DON'T THINK SO MUCH; GET TO WORK!

San Francisco Academy of Comic Art

One of Segar's remarkable abilities was his versatility. These comic strip episodes (as well the excerpts from his erstwhile novel project) display his talent for melodrama, pathos, and violence, even in burlesque. These examples show him having fun with satire, parody, and whimsy.

low over his brow, his eyes watching the entrance anxiously. Like many before him, Castor Oyl had come to this port of the South China Sea to keep a mysterious rendezvous.

The novel is really marvellously gripping, and just as fast-paced and entertaining as Segar stated. Early into the tale (page 35 of the manuscript) we encounter the following exchange between Popeye and Castor:

Castor told him [Popeye] about the strange pair he had observed a short while before on the poop deck. The old seaman gripped his arm greatly agitated.

"D' ye happen t' know th' name o' this craft, lad?" he demanded excitedly.

"Sure. The mate told me. It's a goofy name, too. It's called the Black Barnacle."

"The Black Barnacle!" cried Popeye. "M' gawd matey—we're sunk!"

"What d' you mean, we're sunk?"

"We're good as dead men, I tell ye!" moaned Popeye in utter despair. "We might well be fryin' on th' devil's own griddle, fer there's hell t' pay an' no hot pitch for'ard!"

A vague uneasiness seized Castor. It was not like Popeye to act like this. He had never known the old sailor to give way to fear or despair before.

"What the heck are you driving at, Popeye?"

"M' lad, we're on an evil craft," the sailor told him with forced calm. "She's th' worst hell-ship on th' Seven Seas—she's barred from most parts, an' her reputation stinks worse'n a guano barge. Fer nigh onter twenty years she's been makin' a black name fer herself. There's tales told o' many a man shanghaied aboard her, an' not one o' 'em was even seen agin. One day she dropped anchor at Hong-Kong with three dead men hangin' from th' riggin'. Mutiny, her officers reported, but th' dead men were white, an' th' Black Barnacle always carries a Malay crew. Why, matey, there's th' ghosts o' a hundred dead men walkin' her decks at night an' there's some that swears they've seen skelekins dancin' on her poop in th' moonlight!"

Castor shivered in spite of himself and peered about in the darkness apprehensively. "Apple sauce!" he said trying to shake off the uneasiness aroused by his comrade's weird tale. "Quit telling ghost stories or I'll be nutty, too!"

"An' that ol' woman ye seen t' night is th' terrer o' th' Seven Seas," went on Popeye. "Fishermen's wives tell their younguns about her when they're bad—that th' Sea Hag'll git 'em if they ain't good!"

"The Sea Hag!" exclaimed Castor.

"Aye. That's th' only name she's knowed by an' I reckon it fits th' ol' wench. Ye kin see we're in a bad way. We're sunk, I tell ye."

The next scene, from the non-stop suspense of the last third of the novel, speaks for itself in terms of black comedy and classic melodrama. It begins on page 150 of the manuscript:

A form suddenly appeared from out of the night and slipped to Castor's side. He started as a hand took his arm. He wheeled about to look into Sally's white, frightened face.

"I got away from Skag and Popeye," she whispered, and then as she looked through the window at the man inside. "Oh, is that my father?"

"Yeah—that's what your mother says. But he ain't much to be proud of."

Fadewell poured himself a drink and downed it with one gulp. Then he turned to stare toward the window uneasily as if,

subconsciously, he felt their eyes upon him. His back was toward the door. He turned quickly as it opened and closed. He sprang to his feet as the muffled figure of a woman entered the room. For a long moment the Sea Hag stood motionless. Then she moved slowly toward the startled man. The light of the lamp fell upon her mummy-mask of a face, grown hideous in its consuming hatred. Fadewell stared at her fascinated.

"My gawd—Aimee!" he cried hoarsely. "You!"

A horrible laugh of fiendish triumph came in reply. Then the woman thrust her frightful face close to his.

"You know me, eh, Ace Fadewell!"

The man looked about him in panic. His eye fell upon the pistol that hung in its holster behind the bed. He moved toward it, but froze in his tracks as the woman's deadly voice cut the air.

"Stop where you are—you yellow-bellied louse!"

She was covering him with her pistol. Fadewell seemd to wilt and collapsed weakly into his chair. His hands shook violently as he wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"What—what do you want, my dear?" he queried with a sickly attempt at a smile.

The Sea Hag was staring at the cringing man with smoldering eyes that seemed to burn holes through him. She stared at him in motionless silence for so long that he could stand the tension no longer.

"My gawd, woman, speak!"

"I'm just feasting my soul upon you," she purred in a soft voice, the very softness of which dripped with the venom of her deadly hatred. "Isn't quite proper for a wife to look at her husband after twenty years—you wouldn't begrudge me that pleasure would you? Or perhaps you long for my caresses?

Fadewell shuddered in horror as he stared fascinated at that hideous mummy face.

"Oh, I know that I've gone off a little in looks," the woman went on. "But twenty years—and—and other things—do leave their mark. Surely you did not love the flesh alone—do you remember how you used to hold me—" the woman beat her withered breasts, "—me—this—in your arms and tell me that you thought I was the most beautiful creature you had ever seen?"

"Stop this horrible farce!" shrieked the man springing to his feet.

She motioned him back to his seat with the muzzle of her gun. "I knew you would be—well, let us say, somewhat startled to see me again. That probably accounts for your agitation. I can well understand it after all we meant to each other. You did so much for me, Ace—so much more than I had dared to dream about. But I have come back to you, my husband, to repay in a small measure my great debt to you."

Outside the window, Castor and Sally were watching the scene in breathless fascination. The girl was trembling like an aspen leaf. They saw the Sea Hag move to the table and heard her speak in that terrible, venomous, soft voice.

"I have brought you a present, Ace. It is just a little reminder from the past."

Keeping the man covered with her pistol the woman placed a hypodermic syringe and a vial of pale yellow serum upon the table.

"There, my dearest husband—a gift from your beautiful wife!"

The horror of her fiendish plan swept over Fadewell as he divined her purpose.

"My gawd—the yellow jaundice serum!" he cried. "Have you lost your mind, woman?"

"Yes," she assured him in that deadly calm voice that was maddening. "Something snapped more than twenty years ago."

Want more, don't yer, ye scurvy scupper rats? Well, by gawd (and the casual, effective use of that term by the characters in the novel shows what was lost to Popeye's salty speech in the strip by the wowser restrictions of comic strip expression in the '30s—restrictions very little changed today), *by gawd, yer can't have any more*! And for a very good reason, at least by the lights of the present owner of the novel manuscript, Segar's daughter, Mrs. Myrtle Clausen.

Clearly, she would like to publish the book. A great advocate of her father's remarkable career and unparalleled talent, Mrs. Clausen would like nothing better than to see this gorgeously roistering sea shanty of a horror adventure tale in print for all of Segar's present fans (and the public at large) to enjoy. The manuscript could easily be published in an attractive package, with illustrations and other character cuts taken from generally parallel panels in actual Segar *Thimble Theatre* episodes of the period, and a color jacket from the same source. It clearly aches to be gotten into covers.

But problems with the syndicate appear to be as cumbersome now as half a century ago. The public, the fans, await...

Mrs. Clausen understandably wants to keep the bulk of *The Sea Hag* novel (and its general plot line, character involvement, denouement, etc.) out of public knowledge until such publication as may one date take place. (The manuscript, with Segar's covering letter/outline to Connolly, is on deposit for reference at the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art, but the Academy has agreed to make no copy of the text for any party, nor are any researchers permitted to do more than take brief notes in reading it themselves, while all must sign a statement that they will not repeat or publicize the story line *per se* in any way.) What has been published above is all anyone will be allowed to see in print until the book itself is finally in the bookstores and—at last!—on all the collectors' shelves. Speed the day...

THIMBLE THEATRE
NO IDEA YET, EH? SAY MR. QUILLY WHY DON'T YOU THINK A LITTLE?
YOU CAN'T SAY I DON'T THINK! I DO THINK!
YOU JUST THINK YOU THINK! THE TROUBLE WITH YOU IS, YOU THINK WITH YOUR FACE INSTEAD OF YOUR BRAIN, I KNOW THAT
ANYBODY CAN SCREW UP HIS FACE LIKE A STEWED PRUNE, BUT THAT AINT THINKING! ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT!
YOU'RE JUST A HIGH SALARIED PIECE OF CHEESE!
Sa ncisco Academy of Comic Art

Note: *The foregoing article has been especially prepared for* NEMO *by Bill Blackbeard from a longer and more broadly discursive chapter on the same material to appear in his critical history of comics,* The Endless Art, *due to be published by Oxford University Press in 1984.*

Through an Ink-Bottle Darkly... Oof! Zam! Plop!

Segar pokes fun at his own profession of cartooning

One of the charms of *Thimble Theatre* is the *inside* nature of Segar's writing. When the reader least expects it—at a denouement, or high point of melodrama, or in the middle of a pregnant pause—a character will invariably deliver an aside. It may be *sotto voce*, but it's also a stage whisper; it's meant for the reader. But the juxtaposition makes the entire strip's flavor that of a private matter, an inside joke.

So the reader is in on these little matters. Although the characters shed their formal roles as actors in little plays (it continued thus in *Minute Movies*), the effect is that of a transitory playfulness. In later years, Walt Kelly handled this device better than anybody.

Therefore, when Segar introduced a comic artist into his strip, it became a chance to kid his fellows—and perhaps himself—as well as seizing on a clever subject for gags. He winked at readers, winked at newspapermen who knew the butt of the parody first-hand, and dealt as well with the stereotype of "nutty" comic artists. In so doing he worked on several planes in his satire which (when he was not blinking so fitfully) Segar was accustomed to do and do well.

The several examples on preceding pages and those here are from 1928, just about a year before Popeye entered the strip. Castor is proprietor of a newspaper and finds editorial cartoonists and strip artists the bane of his journalistic existence. —Rick Marschall

THIMBLE THEATRE
ALL UP-TO-DATE NEWSPAPERS HAVE COMIC STRIPS AND COMIC CARTOONS SO I'VE ADVERTISED FOR A COMIC ARTIST
THE EVENING BREEZE" WILL BE A FIRST CLASS PAPER BEFORE LONG. I'LL SEE TO THAT
POW! BAM! SOCK! BOP! OOF!
WELL WHAT IN THE ...?
POW!
SAY WHO ARE YOU
OOF!
KONK!
BOP!
WHO, ME? OOF! POW!
!?
I'M A COMIC ARTIST. PLOP!
PLOP!

THIMBLE THEATRE
THIS COMIC ARTIST SEEMS SORT OF QUEER TO ME.. I'VE HEARD THEY ALL GO NUTTY AFTER AWHILE
PLOP
POW
OF COURSE I NEVER SAW A COMIC ARTIST BEFORE - MAY BE YOU'VE GOT TO GET USED TO 'EM
BAM
ALL RIGHT, YOU! STOP TALKING LIKE A SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT AND SHOW YOUR STUFF
ZOWIE!
I PROMISE YOU I WON'T DIE LAUGHING
BAM!
AND SEE—THERE HE GETS HIS HEAD IN A PILE-DRIVER AND IT IS SMASHED INTO A MILLION PIECES
POW!
YAH! HAW HAW!

THIMBLE THEATRE
SURE I'M A GOOD COMIC ARTIST - LOOK AT THIS ONE
HO-HO HO-HO
SEE - THE WIFE THROWS AN AX AT HER HUSBAND AND CUTS OFF HIS HEAD - WHOOP!
YAH-HAW! HAW! PLOP!
AND IN THIS ONE THE DOCTOR MISTAKES THE PATIENT'S HEART FOR HIS APPENDIX - RIP!
HAW-HAW!
POW!
HAW!
BAM
ZOP
POW
PLOP
UMPH
ZOWIE
OOF
BIFF
LOOK AT THIS ONE
POW!
YAH! HAW! HAW PLOP
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO HIRE HIM OR NOT HE SEEMS GOOFY TO ME
ALL COMIC ARTISTS ARE NUTTY - DIDN'T YOU KNOW THAT?
SURE I DON'T YOU KNOW THAT?

THIMBLE THEATRE
I THINK HE'S GOOFY BUT MAYBE ALL COMIC ARTISTS GET THAT WAY ON ACCOUNT OF THE HEAVY BRAIN WORK
POW
BAM
ABOUT THE SALARY MR. SNICKLES - HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT TO DRAW FUNNY PICTURES FOR THE EVENING BREEZE?
BAM! I WANT $500. A WEEK HA! HA!
AND NOT A CENT LESS - HA! HA!
HA! HA! YOU'RE A GREAT KIDDER, OH BOY THAT'S RICH!
(HA! HA! YOU THINK I'M JOKING DON'T YOU? POW! BAM! HA! HA
YOU REALLY WANT $500.
YOU MEAN IT?
SURE - COMIC ARTISTS GET BIG MONEY - SOME GET AS HIGH AS A THOUSAND A WEEK
GOOD NIGHT!

All *Thimble Theatre* strips in this article courtesy and © King Features Syndicate

San Francisco Academy of Comic Art

THIMBLE THEATRE
WELL I'VE GONE AND DONE IT. I'VE HIRED A COMIC ARTIST. MY GOSH BUT IT TAKES MONEY TO RUN A NEWSPAPER $500 A WEEK FOR LITTLE FUNNY PICTURES! WOW!
HELLO MR. SNICKLES. HOW'S THE COMIC ARTIST THIS FINE DAY?
HAW! HAW! GOOD JOKE ON YOU BOSS. YEOW! PLOP!
YEAH? WHAT'S THE JOKE?
HOO-HOO! BAM!
I'VE BEEN ASLEEP ALL MORNING - HAW! HAW! HAVEN'T DONE A LICK OF WORK!
POW!
MAYBE I HAVEN'T ANY SENSE OF HUMOR
YAH! YAH! HAW! HAW! YAH! HAW!
YOO BOY YEOW
SEGAR
HERE COMES MY HIGH SALARIED COMIC ARTIST. I SUPPOSE HE WANTS TO TALK OVER SOME SILLY IDEA
CASTOR OIL EDITOR
I JUST GOT A WHALE OF AN IDEA FOR MY COMIC STRIP I WANT YOU TO HEAR IT
A FELLOW WAS WALKING DOWN THE STREET AND HE SLIPS ON A BANANA PEEL — BUSTS HIS NOSE, BREAKS A LEG, THREE RIBS AND FRACTURES HIS SKULL!
ISN'T THAT THE FUNNIEST THING YOU EVER HEARD OF
HAW HAW HAW!
AND WHILE HE'S LAYING THERE UNCONSCIOUS, WHY NOT HAVE A MURDERER COME ALONG AND SHOOT HIM A FEW TIMES?
GRR
WOW! THAT'LL BE A SCREAM! THANKS FOR THE SUGGESTION! HAW! HAW!
3-1
THIMBLE THEATRE
I TOLD YOU I WAS A GOOD COMIC ARTIST- LISTEN TO THIS FUNNY IDEA- A VERY TRUTHFUL OFFICE BOY WANTED TO GO TO THE BALL GAME
HE THOUGHT OF TELLING THE BOSS THAT HIS GRANDMOTHER JUST DIED - BUT BEING A TRUTHFUL LITTLE BOY HE QUICKLY CAST THE IDEA ASIDE
HE JUST SIMPLY COULDN'T TELL A FIB - REMEMBER THIS LITTLE BOY IS UNUSUALLY TRUTHFUL
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK HE DID TO KEEP FROM LYING?
I DON'T KNOW- WHAT DID HE DO?
SHOT HIS GRAND-MOTHER!
HA! HA! HA! HA! HAW!
AND I'M PAYING HIM 500 BUCKS A WEEK
3-2
THIMBLE THEATRE
ALL COMIC ARTISTS ARE GOOFY. WE ALL KNOW THAT- BUT WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS- HAS MY COMIC ARTIST GOT A SENSE OF HUMOR? IF NOT, OUT HE GOES
SIT DOWN MR. SNICKLES, I WANT A FEW WORDS WITH YOU - AS EDITOR OF THIS NEWSPAPER I CLAIM THE RIGHT TO ASK YOU A PERSONAL QUESTION
HAVE YOU GOT, OR HAVE YOU NOT GOT A SENSE OF HUMOR? ANSWER YES OR NO -
OUCH!
?
PLANTED THIS TACK IN YOUR CHAIR FOR YOU AND SAT ON IT MYSELF!
HA HA HAW HA HA
I GUESS HE'S O.K.
3-3
THIMBLE THEATRE
JOGGONE! WRITING EDITORIALS IS NO SET UP - LET'S SEE NOW- I'VE GOT TO GET IN SOMETHING ABOUT KINDNESS TO DUMB ANIMALS AND SELF CONTROL
HEY LISTEN TO THIS FUNNY IDEA I JUST DOPED UP! POW!
OF COURSE THAT COMIC ARTIST HAD TO FLOP IN! AN EDITOR CERTAINLY HAS HIS TROUBLES!!
SURE - YOU SEE THERE WERE ONLY NINETY NINE POTATOES COOKED AND THERE WERE A HUNDRED SOLDIERS SO WHATCHA THINK THE COOK DID?
AW, THAT'S AN OLD ONE! HE SHOT ONE OF THE SOLDIERS!
NO HE DIDN'T
HE COOKED ANOTHER POTATO! HAW! HAW!
AND ALWAYS BE KIND AND PATIENT AND DON'T EVER LOSE YOUR TEMPER.
THIMBLE THEATRE
RUNNING A NEWSPAPER IS A LOT OF GRIEF - BELIEVE ME AN EDITOR HAS TO HAVE SOMETHING UNDER HIS HAT BESIDES DANDRUFF
ALL GOOD NEWSPAPERS HAVE COMIC ARTISTS - HOPE MR SNICKLES TURNS OUT O.K. I'M PAYING HIM $500 A WEEK
THERE'S A FELLOW READING ONE OF MR SNICKLES' COMICS I'LL WATCH HIM AND SEE HOW HE TAKES IT
HE'S JUST ABOUT READY TO BUST OUT LAUGHING
BOOOOO! SNIFF
YEAH, WHAT A FINE COMIC ARTIST I'VE GOT!!
3-6
SEGAR

YOU'RE RIGHT - THERE'S NO JOY IN A COMIC ART'ST'S LIFE WHY DON'T YOU COMMIT SUICIDE?
SHUCKS
US GENIUSES DON'T GET NO BREAKS
1-11
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Popeye the Editor-Man

In 1934 Popeye himself tried his hand at editing a newspaper, and the comic artist—or rather the absurd public stereotype of this singular profession—became the focus of another continuity.

Just as with the several strongmen who preceded Popeye in *Thimble Theatre*, Segar was here not falling back on old gags or themes in laziness, but returning to a device to refine, to hone, to improve.

Incidentally, some comments in the following sequence come as close to Segar ever came to editorializing; he chides his local subscribing editors to recognize the value of comic strips. Popeye's paper increased its circulation in large numbers because of strips! Plop! —Rick Marschall

WE JUST LEARNED ABOUT HOW YOU DRESSED AS AN OLD LADY AND THEN AS AN OLD MAN AND RAN SEVERAL OF THE BRUISER BOYS OUT OF TOWN - WE KNOW YOU'LL CLEAN UP THIS TOWN AND WE'LL GIVE YOU OUR SUPPORT
DEAR SALTS OF THE EART'- I THANKS HA FOR YER SUSPORT OF ME NEWSPAPER - BUT I AINT SUSPRIZED ON ACCOUNT OF YA ALL LOOKS LIKE SWELL PEOPLE
I AIN'T MUCH TO LOOK AT PERSNALLY - SOMETIMES I DOES RIGHT - SOMETIMES I DOES WRONG - BUT I ALWAYS DOES WHAT I THINKS IS RIGHT — ANYWAYS, I YAM WHAT I YAM AN' THA'S ALL I YAM —
I GOT A SUSPRIZE COMIN' UP FOR THIS COMMUNIKY - I'VE SENT TO THE CITY FOR A CARTOONISK - WE'RE GONER HAVE FUNNY PITCHERS IN THIS NEWSPAPER - REAL HOOMEROUS FUNNY COMIC STRIP PITCHERS
WHEE —!! COMIC STRIPS IS JUST WHAT WE WANT!
WE'LL ALL SUBSCRIBE TO YOUR PAPER
COMIC CARTOONS IS WHAT WE WANT
AIN'T IT FUNNY HOW FOLKS LIKES COMICS?
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THE LAST AND WORST OF THE BRUISER BOYS
IF I KNEW WHO RAN MY BROTHERS OUT OF TOWN THERE'D BE SOME FUNERALS AROUND HERE
ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO HIRE A COMIC ARTIST TO DRAW FOR THE PUDDLEBURG WEEKLY SPLASH?
I SEZ I YAM! I GOT ONE COMIN'
MOST EVER'BODY LIKES COMICS - THEY'LL BOOST OUR CIRCLEATION
I HEAR THAT CARTOONISTS MAKE BIG MONEY. COULD YOU PAY HIM?
YA THINK THEY MAKES MOREN $15." A WEEK?
SURE THEY DO
WELL, THEY DON'T EARN NO MORE - ALL THEY DO IS DRAWER FUNNY JOKE PITCHERS. A' COURSE, IF IT TOOK BRAIN-WORK I'D BE WILLIN' TO PAY MORE
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! INTRODUCING THE WORLD-FAMOUS CARTOONIST - B. LOONY BULLONY - ENROUTE TO PUDDLEBURG
HE HAS DRAWN MANY SUCCESSFUL STRIPS - YOU, OF COURSE, REMEMBER "OOP THE DOOP BOOP, THE STUPE" "GOOP THE PLOOP" AND LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, THAT HILARIOUS CREATION "GOOK, THE SPOOK"
BAM!! SOCKO! WISHT I HAD A IDEAR! UMP!! PLOP! POW! ZOWIE!
GRR!!

I SEZ THAT IF YA GIVES THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANTS YA'LL SUCCEED IN ANY BIZNISS
CORRECT
AN' THA'S WHY I GOT A COMIC ARTIST COMIN' TO DRAW FUNNY PITCHERS FOR OUR READERS
I'M JUST DYING TO SEE HIM - I'LL BET HE HAS SMILES ALL OVER HIS FACE
THA'S HIM NOW
KNOCK KNOCK
COME RIGHT IN, MISTER FUNNY MAN
KNOCK KNOCK
BLOW ME DOWN!
ME, TOO!
PENCILS
INK
B. LOONY BULLONY COMIC ARTIST
DRAWING
CLOMP CLOMP
GRIP
1-3

IF THAT SWAB'S A COMIC ARTIST THEN I YAMA UKULELE
HE MAY BE POPEYE — I'VE HEARD THAT ALL GOOD HUMORISTS ARE SAD, TRAGIC PERSONS
WELL, IF I YAM GONER MAKE A SUCCESS OF THIS PAPER I GOT TO HAVE A COMIC ARTIST
AHOY — I WANTS TO AST YA SUMPIN
DIDJA EVER DRAW UP A ORIGINAL FUNNY JOKE?
PLOP!
SAY, WHAT MADE YA DO THAT WHEN I AST YA DID YA EVER DO A FUNNY JOKE?
YOUR QUEST'ON ASTONISHED ME AND THAT'S HOW US COMIC ARTISTS SHOW WERE SURPRISED - WE JUST PLOP R'GHT OUT OF THE PICTURE
1-4
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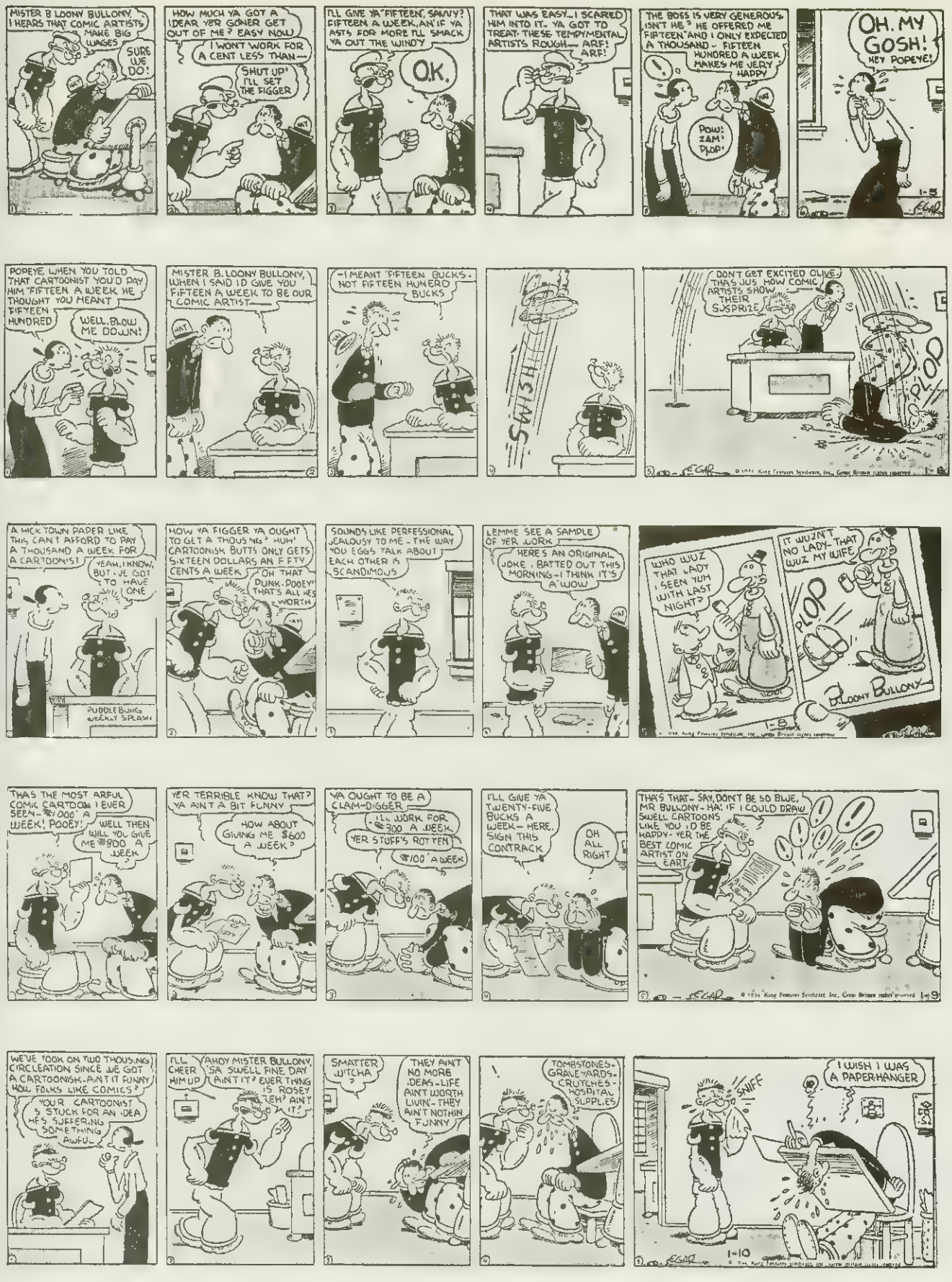

MISTER B LOONY BULLONY, I HEARS THAT COMIC ARTISTS MAKE BIG WAGES
SURE WE DO!
HOW MUCH YA GOT A DEAR YER GONER GET OUT OF ME? EASY NOW.
I WON'T WORK FOR A CENT LESS THAN—
SHUT UP! I'LL SET THE FIGGER
I'LL GIVE YA "FIFTEEN", SAVVY? FIFTEEN A WEEK, AN' IF YA ASTS FOR MORE I'LL SMACK YA OUT THE WINDY
O.K.
THAT WAS EASY... I SCARED HIM INTO IT.. YA GOT TO TREAT THESE TEMPYMENTAL ARTISTS ROUGH— ARF! ARF!
THE BOSS IS VERY GENEROUS, ISN'T HE? HE OFFERED ME FIFTEEN" AND I ONLY EXPECTED A THOUSAND - FIFTEEN HUNDRED A WEEK MAKES ME VERY HAPPY
POW! ZAM! PLOP!
OH. MY GOSH! HEY POPEYE!
POPEYE, WHEN YOU TOLD THAT CARTOONIST YOU'D PAY HIM "FIFTEEN A WEEK, HE THOUGHT YOU MEANT FIFTEEN HUNDRED
WELL, BLOW ME DOWN!
MISTER B. LOONY BULLONY, WHEN I SAID I'D GIVE YOU FIFTEEN A WEEK TO BE OUR COMIC ARTIST—
-I MEANT "FIFTEEN BUCKS." NOT FIFTEEN HUNERD BUCKS
SWISH
DON'T GET EXCITED OLIVE. THAS JUS HOW COMIC ARTISTS SHOW THEIR SUSPRIZE
PLOP
A HICK TOWN PAPER LIKE THIS, CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY A THOUSAND A WEEK FOR A CARTOONIST!
YEAH, I KNOW, BUT I'VE GOT TO HAVE ONE
PUDDLE BUNG WEEKLY SPLASH
HOW YA FIGGER YA OUGHT TO GET A THOUSNG? HUH! CARTOONISK BUTTS ONLY GETS SIXTEEN DOLLARS AN FIFTY CENTS A WEEK
OH THAT DUNK-POOEY! THAT'S ALL HES WORTH
SOUNDS LIKE PERFESSIONAL JEALOUSY TO ME - THE WAY YOU EGGS TALK ABOUT EACH OTHER IS SCANDIMOUS
LEMME SEE A SAMPLE OF YER WORK
HERE'S AN ORIGINAL JOKE, BATTED OUT THIS MORNING - I THINK IT'S A WOW
WHO WUZ THAT LADY I SEEN YUM WITH LAST NIGHT?
IT WUZNT NO LADY- THAT WUZ MY WIFE
PLOP
B.LOONY BULLONY
THAS THE MOST ARFUL COMIC CARTOON I EVER SEEN- $7,000 A WEEK! POOEY!
WELL THEN WILL YOU GIVE ME $900 A WEEK
YER TERRIBLE KNOW THAT? YA AIN'T A BIT FUNNY
HOW ABOUT GIVING ME $600 A WEEK?
YA OUGHT TO BE A CLAM-DIGGER
I'LL WORK FOR $300 A WEEK
YER STUFF'S ROTTEN
$100 A WEEK
I'LL GIVE YA TWENTY-FIVE BUCKS A WEEK— HERE. SIGN THIS CONTRACK
OH ALL RIGHT
THAS THAT- SAY, DON'T BE SO BLUE, MR BULLONY- HA! IF I COULD DRAW SWELL CARTOONS LIKE YOU, I'D BE HAPPY- YER THE BEST COMIC ARTIST ON EART
WE'VE TOOK ON TWO THOUSNG CIRCLEATION SINCE WE GOT A CARTOONISK- AIN'T IT FUNNY HOW FOLKS LIKE COMICS?
YOUR CARTOONIST S STUCK FOR AN IDEA HE'S SUFFERING SOMETHING AWFUL
I'LL CHEER HIM UP
AHOY MISTER BULLONY, SA SWELL FINE DAY AIN'T IT? EVER THING IS ROSEY EH? AIN'T IT?
SMATTER WITCHA?
THEY AIN'T NO MORE DEAS - LIFE AIN'T WORTH LIVIN - THEY AIN'T NOTHIN FUNNY
TOMBSTONES - GRAVEYARDS - CRUTCHES - HOSPITAL SUPPLIES
SNIFF
I WISH I WAS A PAPERHANGER
1-10

IT'S LIKE THIS MR WIMPY ,F SOMEBODY DON'T CHEER UP OUR COMIC ARTIST THIS WEEKLY NEWSPAPER WILL GO ON THE ROCKS - OUR PERSCRIBERS WANTS FUNNY PITCHERS
I WILL TAKE IT UPON MYSELF TO FILL HIS HEART WITH CHEER_ INDEED, I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO INSPIRE HIM
FINE
SAD WORLD, AIN'T IT?
I BEG PARDON?
THERE'S NO HUMOR IN THIS TRAGIC LIFE - NO SUNSHINE FOR US POOR COMIC ARTISTS
GOT HIM CHEERED UP YET, WIMPY? WE GO TO PRESS IN THREE DAYS
YOU'RE RIGHT_ THERE'S NO JOY IN A COMIC ARTIST'S LIFE WHY DON'T YOU COMMIT SUICIDE?
SNIFF
US GENIUSES DON'T GET NO BREAKS
I'M QUITTING - I'M THROUGH WITH COMICS_ THERE AIN'T NO MORE IDEAS - I'M GOING TO LEARN PAPER-HANGING -
WHY DON'T YA GET A JOB IN A CRUTCH FACKORY
HELLO EMPLOYMENT ORFICE_ SHIP ME ONE GROSS OF COMIC ARTISTS. GET EM OFF ON THE NEX TRAIN_ THIS IS THE PUDDLEBURG WEEKLY SPLASH SPEAKIN
WE HAD A GROSS THIS MORNING BUT THEY ALL GOT JOBS AS CLAM-DIGGERS - WE MIGHT SCRAPE UP SIX OR EIGHT
OKAY
BOYS_ BEFORE I HIRES YA THEY'S SUMPIN IMPORTINK I WANTS TO SAY TO YA-
I WON'T STAN' FOR NO SOUR PAN COMIC ARTISTS AROUND THIS NEWSPAPER
HEAVENS POPEYE! DID YOU HIRE SIX COMIC ARTISTS?
YEAH - WE OUGHTA GET LOTSA IDEARS WITH SIX OF EM
ARE THEY CROUCHY LIKE MR BULLONY WAS?
I TOLD EM I WOULDN'T PUT UP WITH NO BLARSTED SOUR-PAN COMIC ARTISTS
IF THEY AIN'T SMILIN' I'LL KICK EM OUT I DON'T WANT NO GROUCHY TEMPYMENTAL HOOMER.SKS ARQUN' HERE
WELL - I YAM CERTNGLY GLAD TO SEE YA ALL SMILIN' THIS FINE MORNIN
COMIC ART DEPT-
NO JOKE BOOKS ALLOWED
STEAL NOT THY NEIGHBOR'S GAG
BE ORIGINAL
WHATCHA DOIN DOWN THERE? WHY DON'T YA GET BUSY AN DRAW PITCHERS?
I'M TRYING TO GET AN IDEA FOR MY COMIC STRIP
THA'S NO WAY TO THINK UP COMICS - I'LL DOPE UP A JOKE FOR YOUR STRIP
OH THANK YOU
DID YOU GET AN IDEA? FOR ME?
WHAT'SA MATTER? A CAN'T YA GET YER OWN IDEAS? ARE YA DUMB OR SUMPIN'? YA WANT TO LEARN TO THINK FOR YERSELF
HANK BRUISER THE LAST OF THE BRUISER BOYS, ROBBED A BANK THIS MORNIN AN' THE LOCAL POLICE ARE SO SCARED OF HIM THEY WON'T ARRESK HIM
HAVE THIS PUT ON THE FRONT PAGE_ I, POPEYE, EDITOR OF THE PUDDLEBURG SPLASH, IS A PEACE-LOVIN ANTI-PUGNISKUS MAN_ I YAM AGAINST FIGHTIN - BUT -
(PUT THE 'BUT' IN BIG LETTERS)
I DO HEREBY CHALLENGE HANK BRUISER TO A SPRIZE FIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF MAIN STREET_ I WILL LAY HIM AMONG THE SWEEPEAS SO QUICK HE WON'T KNOW WICH END IS UP - YERS TRULE, POPEYE
I WANTS EACH OF YOU CARTOONISKS TO DRAW A CARTOON OF HANK BRUISER. CALL HIM ANYTHING YA LIKES BUT DON'T USE SWEAR WORDS ON ACCOUNT OF I DON'T WANT CHILREN TO READ VULGULAR WORDS
HANK BRUISER IS A RAT
HANK BRUISER IS A VULTURE
HANK BRUISER IS A SNAKE
HANK BRUISER IS A SKUNK
HANK BRUISER IS A SAP
LATER
I'LL MURDER HIM TO DEATH! G-R-R-R-R-
THE BRUISER
HANK BRUISER IS A HORSES NECK
I KIN LICK HIM - YERS TRULE POPEYE

AH THERE IS THE LAST OF THE BRUISER BOYS - I WILL SAVE POPEYE THE TROUBLE OF LICKING HIM - I SHALL KNOCK HIM OUT PERSONALLY WITH MY CLUB
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
SWELL!
I BEG PARDON?
BEG PARDON?
SAY- YOU DIDN'T HIT ME WITH THAT CLUB, DID YOU?
WHO, ME? HEAVENS, NO! HOW YOU TALK! YOU MUST MEAN SOMEBODY ELSE
I INTENDED TO SLAY THE LAST OF THE BRUISER BOYS - BUT I SUPPRESSED MY GREAT DESIRE AND I HAVE SAVED HIM FOR YOU, POPEYE, OLD PAL OF MINE
WHEW
IF YOU'LL RUN HANK BRUISER OUT OF TOWN WE ALL THANK YOU - HE'S WAITING FOR YOU DOWN ON MAIN STREET
I'LL DO ME BEST
YOU SHRIMP! WHEN I SHOW YOU HOW TOUGH I AM YOU'LL FAINT - WATCH THIS BIG ROCK
POOEY
BONK
I DIDN'T FEEL IT
DID YA FEEL THAT
I'LL GET YOU FOR THAT YOU RUNT - TWEET TWEET - C'MERE
KNOCKED HIM GOOFY THE FIRST POP - HEY, YOU!
HELP! MAMA!
BOP
SPLAT
FOR'D MARCH
TWEET TWEET TWEET TWEET TWEET
THIS'LL BE THE LAST OF THE LAST OF THE BRUISER BOYS
TWEET
SMACK
CITY DUMP
HELLO, MISTER WORKS - WHAT YA DOIN HERE N PUDDLEBURG?
HELLO, POPEYE - I CAME TO BUY THIS PAPER
WHY, MISTER WORKS, YA GIVE ME THIS PAPER AS A PRESENT AN NOW YA WANTS TO BUY IT. HOW COME?
I THINK I CAN MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF IT - HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT?
20000 BUCKS
20,000 ! WHEW! THAT'S AN AWFUL LOT FER A PAPER LIKE THIS
SEE THAT PILE OF LETTERS? EACH ONE IS A PERSCRIPT ON - WE NOW GOT 25 THOUSNG CIRCLEATION - CUSTOMERS IN TEN COUNTIES
HOW DID YOU BUILD UP A CIRCULATION LIKE THAT IN A FEW MONTHS?
I CLEANED OUT THE BRUISER BOYS - THAS ONE REASING
BUT HERE'S THE MAIN REASING - FUNNY PITCHERS BY CONTENTED COMIC ARTISTS
POW
BINGO
ZIP
UGH
BONK!
SPLAT
SWISH
WHAM
OOF
ZAM
POW
ZOWIE
BAM
PLOP
BOP
EEK
ZAM
ZIP
YEAH MISTER WORKS, I GOT TO GIVE MORE TIME TO SWEE'DEA I GOT TO GET BUSY AN BE A MOTHER TO HIM — THA'S WHY I YAM WILLIN' TO SELL THIS NEWSPAPER
$20,000
YOU'VE BUILT UP CIRCULATION AND GOOD WILL — I GUESS IT'S WORTH TWENTY THOUSAND I'LL WRITE YOU A CHECK
I KIND OF GOT ATTACHED TO THEM COMIC ARTISTS AN' I WANTS YA TO PROMISE ME YA WILL BE GOOD TO EM -
A COMIC ARTIST AIN'T NO DIFFERENT THAN YOU OR ME OR ANYBODY EXCEP' HE KNOWS HOW TO DRAW PITCHERS AN IS CRAZY IN THE HEAD
YEAH, THAT'S SO
SEE THAT POOR ARTIST TRYIN TO GET A IDEAR BORN'D? I'LL GO HOLD HIS HEAD AN NOTICE WHAT HAPPENS
WHEE! I GOT ONE!
SEE MR WORKS, KINDNESS TO DUMB ANIMALS, THAS WHAT COMIC ARTISTS NEED

Hergé: Genius and Friend

A personal recollection of *Tintin*'s creator and his remarkable comic series.

The recent death of Belgian cartoonist Hergé left a void in the world of international comics. Tintin *was one of the most successful—and best-realized—comic strips in history. Hergé created not only a memorable cast of characters whose adventures continued through more than two dozen graphic novels, but possessed a singular vision—bringing to the field a new maturity, detailed artwork, exciting plots, humorous subplots, surprise endings, not to mention a whole generation of imitators throughout Europe.* Tintin *adventures, and the breathtaking artwork that carries them, are classics of the comic-strip form.* NEMO *asked a man who is today in the front rank of the graphic-novel revolution, Mike Greg, to recall his memories of* Tintin *and of the man he worked with and learned from. Greg has created dozens of characters and series, including* Comanche, Bruno Brazil, Olivier Rameau, Bernard Prince *and his biggest hit* Achille Talon *(*Walter Melon *in America). Herewith Greg's memories of Tintin and Hergé, including a never-before-told account of the genesis of the character...*

by Mike Greg

Brussels, Belgium, 1929. A recently born daily newspaper, *Le XXe Siècle* (*The Twentieth Century*) is at the center of all conversations; in just a few months, uninterrupted growing sales have brought it near the top in its field, second only to the enormous *Le Soir* (*The Evening*), the traditional conservative and more-than-neutral Belgian leader of the press. But Tradition and Neutrality are not precisely the words to describe *Le XXe Siècle*. Its editors, photographers, and reporters almost daily startle the public with scoops, news, viewpoints, and "bombs" of all sorts. In comparison, *Le Soir* looks perfectly boring. In fact, it was (and by the way, speaking personally, still is!) but the Belgian readers needed *Le XXe Siècle* to realize it.

French and British papers began to buy article rights from *Le XXe Siècle* and asked for more. The Belgian journalists accumulated stories and columns that rapidly led them to European celebrity. (One writer was later to be even more famous for other reasons. The young Leon Degrelle, who was sent to Mexico for a series about the martyrdom of Catholic priests, became the leader of the Belgian Nazi party, "Rex," and even later the Commander-

Courtesy and © Casterman, S.A.

in-Chief of the European non-German Volunteer Legion on the Russian front. He is still alive and well in Spain.)

The editor-in-chief of *Le XXe Siècle* was a priest, the Rev. Father Norbert Wallez. Apart from sensationalism, his main concern was a frantic anti-Communism (which could explain Degrelle's eventual bent). Father Wallez was a man of the future: he thought that it was never too early to attract new readers; he was the first in his country to introduce in his paper a then totally new concept—a weekly section for children. Appearing every Thursday, the section was a real "paper inside the paper," with news, columns, stories... and *one* comic strip, intended exclusively for children. The little paper had its own staff and own title: *Le Petit Vingtième* (*The Little Twentieth*).

As far as news and articles were concerned, the Reverend knew exactly what to do. But he had never read a comic strip in his life. So he called one of his friends, another priest who was in charge of the Belgian Catholic Boy Scouts association, told him that he was looking for an illustrator for *Le Petit XXe*, and said that he had noticed some very well-done funny drawings in the Boy Scout magazine. Where could he reach the artist?

"Downstairs!" was the answer. "The artist has been working for you since he came back from the army. You'll find him in the basement of your own building; he works as a helper in your photo lab, and is only an amateur artist for us on week-ends."

Wallez sent for the young man. A shy, 22-year-old tall blond fellow showed up, fearing he was going to be fired because he had worked for *The Belgian Boy Scout* magazine.

"Are you really the author of that... er... strip... called *Totor, Chieftain of the Beetle Patrol*?"

"Yes, Father, but..."

"You are now editor-in-chief of our weekly *Petit XXe*. You'll make the covers and titles, illustrate the news, and start a two-pages-a-week serial. I want you to create a young hero, a boy, in the same style as your *Totor* but with a plot in accordance to our views."

"Views, Sir?"

"Yes. Anything funny but strictly anti-Communist. Here's a book I just finished: *Moscow Unveiled* (*Moscou sans voiles*). Read it. You'll find accurate material in it. I want the two first pages delivered on Monday morning. All right, boy, let's start moving. Oh, by the way: your *Totor* thing was signed 'Hergé'. Is that your name?"

"Er... Pen name, Sir. My initials, in reverse: R... G... My name is George Rémi."

"Keep 'Hergé'. It'll attract the scouts. And for the hero's name, find something close to Totor'..."

"How about... Tintin?"

"Sounds good enough. And... Oh yes. Also add a dog. Kids always love dogs."

The dog turned out to be Milou (Snowy) and on the next Thursday, the first two pages of *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets* were printed (in black and white) at the center of *Le Petit XXe*.

Forty years later, Gen. Charles De Gaulle was to admit: "My only international competitor is Tintin. Both of us are little guys who are not afraid of the big ones!"

The accuracy of *Moscow Unveiled* was questionable. But for Hergé, it was the Bible, as a book given to him by an authority like Father Wallez could not possibly be even debated. The kind of Russia that Tintin was to visit in his first 140-page (six panels to a page) adventure was exactly the country that the readers of 1929 envisioned: poverty, police (at the time, the Russian "Guepeou," later the "Tsheka," nowadays the K.G.B.) abuses, and propaganda (Tintin discovers that the Communist factories are decoys, workers burning hay to make the chimneys smoke and hammering on old barrels to produce noise and impress Communist visitors from England).

Hergé never knew what was going to happen to Tintin from one week to the next. And even while he was working on this story, he was actually preparing another one with different characters: *Jo and Zette*, a brother-and-sister team, accompanied by Jocko, a chimp. Hergé felt that to be a much better concept than Tintin, who would probably never have another adventure after *The Soviets*. In May, 1930, the words "The End" were to appear on the last panel of page 140. The Rev. Wallez, who had been delighted all the strip long with Hergé's cracks and attacks on the Communists, came up with another of his brilliant ideas: he hired a young actor, had him dressed as Tintin in Russian clothes, and put him on a train in a local railroad station three miles away from Brussels. Tintin's arrival "from Moscow" had been announced in *Le XXe Siècle*. A pessimistic Hergé accompanied Wallez to greet "Tintin" at the Brussels Central Station. The crowd was estimated at 20,000 and traffic was a standstill in the center of Brussels for the rest of the day.

The following week, Tintin was on his way for new adventures (in the Belgian Congo), Jo and Zette returned to the waiting files, and Hergé was secure for another half century. (Nonetheless, Jo, Zette, and Jocko were given their chance: within the next several years, they lived five different adventures, but never attained more than a fraction of Tintin's success).

A young Belgian printer, Louis Casterman, had made some money with a 10-year contract to print all Belgian telephone books. He had to re-invest his money as quickly as possible to avoid the crushing taxes. How about buying the *Tintin* plates from Wallez and producing books? Father Wallez did not see anything in the offer that could hurt a Communist, so he was not really excited. Besides, he had given

Hergé, seated in foreground, with a young actor who played Tintin in movies; and, in the rear, Bob de Moor, Herge's right-hand assistant.

All illustrations, unless otherwise noted, from collection of Rick Marschall

The "actual" return of Tintin from Russia and, opposite, the way it was prophetically pictured in the graphic story.

the plates and all rights to Hergé and had no time left to care about more comic strips, being totally involved in his new research: a series of articles that were to prove that Adolf Hitler was a Commie.

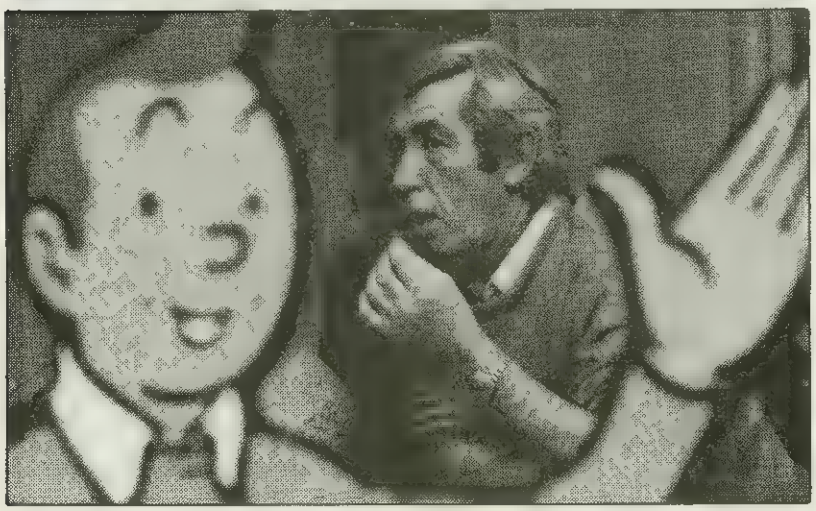
Hergé signed the contract with Casterman. The year was 1931 and rich in History: Casterman sold thousands of the *Tintin* books and had to pay more taxes; *Tintin* was sold to French papers, had his first translation (in Dutch); and last but not least, the modest author of the present text was born.

After *Tintin in the Congo* and *Tintin in America* (where our young hero defeated Al Capone) came *Tintin and the Pharaoh's Cigars* and, for the first time in Hergé's career, a *constructed* plot. Tintin was fighting drug smugglers and what was said about the drugs and their effects was true. A cobra was a real cobra. And there was a difference between African elephants and Asian elephants. The only thing about which Hergé did not care to be realistic was the police, and he shamelessly created two flatfeet with whom nobody could ever identify: Dupont and Dupond (Thompson and Thomson) who were to symbolize all European detectives for the next 50 years...

But the real turn in Tintin's world was to come with the next book: *Le Lotus bleu* (*The Blue Lotus*). Hergé had just discovered China through Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich on the screen, and through Caniff's *Terry and the Pirates*: Trains plunging into the Asian night, Japanese villains, international intrigues in Shanghai... this was to be Tintin's next backdrop, as Hergé told his readers in an interview. The next morning, he was called by a man who introduced himself as a teacher at Brussels University: "I have here several Chinese students," he told Hergé. "They just cannot believe all the wrong ideas Occidental moviemakers, writers, or even humorists can invent about their country. Why not, for a change, listen to one of them before you send your Tintin to an non-existent China?"

Hergé was introduced to Chang-Chon-Yen, a young Chinese student in Belgium. *The Blue Lotus* became real to the last detail. The Chinese signs in the Shanghai streets really meant something, and Tintin spent a page explaining to Chang (who had a part in the story) all the mistakes in the traditional views of Chinese from which Tintin's readers had to be protected. The clothes, the houses, the food, the rank insignias of the British and Japanese soldiers were, for the first time in a European graphic novel, accurate. The book was a triumph and for the rest of his life, Hergé was hooked on a drug that he did not find in the Pharaoh's cigars: a mania for accuracy, in his art as well as in his storytelling. The real and—from then on—unforgettable Tintin was born.

Pere et fils.



The Black Island and *Tintin and the Broken Ear* were the last *Tintin* adventures to be completed (still on 140 pages) before World War II. In May, 1940, *Tintin and the Land of the Black Gold* was interrupted when the Germans invaded neutral Belgium and took over in 18 days. One of the very first things then ordered by

Courtesy and © Casterman, S.A.

Hitler (who probably did not enjoy being called a Communist by Father Wallez) was the cancellation of the daily *XXe Siècle*. *Le Soir*, whose owners had fled the country, was recuperated by selected "collaborationists" to reflect the "new order" in the Belgian press. Hergé was asked to continue Tintin's adventures in that paper. He was to avoid any reference to or comments about the war or politics, was not permitted to show uniforms, and Tintin was to "perform" as if nothing happened. So it was agreed and done. (Oddly enough, this also conformed with Dr. Goebbels's views: between 1939 and 1945, there never was such thing as a German war movie, for instance.).

The Crab with the Golden Claws, *The Secret of the Unicorn*, and *Red Rackham's Treasure* were the resulting adventures, along with the more controversial *The Mysterious Star*, of which we'll speak again. Year after year, *Le Soir* diminished the number of its pages, the panels became smaller and smaller and at the end could hardly be read without a magnifying glass (which was seriously suggested by the paper itself!), but still, Casterman managed to publish more books. But restrictions and limitations of all sorts had now made it impossible to consider 140-page "albums." Then came the idea: inks were not restricted and, shrunk or not, Tintin could appear in color. The readers would accept a thinner book—64 pages—if it were in color, wouldn't they? That was the thing to do. Casterman certainly knew how to work with color. But Hergé did not: he had never touched a brush in his life and had not even the slightest idea how to color a strip for printing! The solution had a name: Edgar P. Jacobs, a former opera baritone (the Brussels Opera had been closed because of electricity and heating problems). Jacobs had become an illustrator and had proven himself an expert colorist, since he had "completed" a *Flash Gordon* story for *Bravo*, a Belgian weekly magazine that had continued to publish American strips until 1942 but had run out of material. Hergé met with Jacobs and asked him if he would be willing to color *Tintin* for him. Jacobs was. And the two men spent nights, weeks and months "rebuilding" the large six-panel page books in color. Some panels had to be cut, others enlarged, balloons had to be moved, dialogue rewritten: soon, in addition to coloring, Jacobs was helping Hergé with new backgrounds, lettering, details of all sorts. The books were selling better than ever. Then came D-Day, the liberation of Brussels, and Hergé and Jacobs found themselves in jail, along with actors, painters, musicians, and almost every Belgian artist who had made the mistake of working during the War... and of having been successful, which was *the* unforgivable sin of the time.

The trial was short. Despite a prosecuting attorney who had spent the last four years in America and came back just to demand life imprisonment for Tintin... er, for Hergé, the judges could not find anything against the cartoonists, except that they accepted as payment banknotes that were printed (*not* by Casterman) with the German seal of approval. The fact that the currency was the only one available in occupied Belgium, and had been used by the judge himself when he was fighting in the underground, was secondary. Hergé and Jacobs were freed but at the same time were forbidden to publish or edit anything for the next 18 months. The pretext for the "punishment" was that, in *The Mysterious Star*, an expedition competitive to Tintin's was allegedly financed by "The Blumenstein Bank of New York." The detail, totally unimportant in the story, had been considered "racist and anti-American." (In later reprints, that name was changed in "Bank Oliveira of Sao Paulo." At last report, however, this failed to cause any riots in South America...)

Hergé suffered a nervous breakdown and went to a small hotel on the coast to try to relax and recuperate. He was joined there by a young publisher who at the time was doing fair business with a series of romantic novels, such as *My Beloved Tommy-Soldier* or *Hearts Under Storm*. Raymond Leblanc had just created the Editions du Lombard (Lombard Publishing Co., from the name of the street where the company was

Georges Rémi
(1907-1983)

Collection of Fred Schreiber

The pencil working page by Hergé for page 5 of *The Red Sea Sharks*; opposite, the inked, colored, lettered, printed page.

located in Brussels); since he was covered with medals and certificates for his heroism in the French underground, had no trouble obtaining paper or publishing permits. He went to Hergé with an offer: "That 18-month ban on *Tintin* doesn't mean that you can't touch a pencil. Why don't you go back to the drawing table? That's the best cure you could think of. I'll pay you up front for every page, and next year we'll be ready to launch what I have in mind: a weekly magazine for youngsters, under Tintin's banner. Your popularity is greater than ever and I'll bet my last cent on it."

In September, 1946, two weeks after the end of the ban, the first issue of *Tintin*'s magazine (12 pages, four in full color) hit the stands. The cover illustration introduced *Tintin and the Temple of the Sun*. Other strips were signed by Jacobs (the start of *Blake and Mortimer*, now a

ABDULLAH!...
WRAOUH!
ABDULLAH?..
ABDULLAH!...
Abdullah! Blistering ...
Again, Blistering Barnacles! Fall downstairs again!
You young ruffian! Just you tell me what you're doing here!
Wait!... Wait, Blistering Barnacles! I've got something for you.
Something for me?
Yes, a present.
A present!... Something specially for me, brought from his country, I expect. Dear little fellow!
It's for you, Blistering Barnacles, from me.
Thank you, Abdullah.
A cuckoo-clock! Why, it's magnificent, Abdullah!
You see.. to wind it up...
...you do that!
Ten thousand thundering typhoons!... Don't think you'll get away with that!
WAAAH! WAAAH!
Halt thou!...Touch not the son of my Master!
Courtesy and © Casterman, S.A.

classic), Laudy (a talented painter whom Hergé had met in jail; he completed a graphic version of the Scottish novel *Rob Roy* for the magazine) and Paul Cuvelier, who at the age of 22 had seen his talent acclaimed for his war illustrations of the Battle of the Bulge, in the Belgian Ardennes.

Every bookstand in the country sold out. The print run of the weekly *Tintin* was increased 50% with the second issue. It doubled with Number 4. Four additional pages were introduced with Number 6. The following year, *Tintin* was a 32-page success, with 24 pages in full color and a waiting list for subscriptions. Casterman (who had had his share of post-war problems) was still the publisher for the books, and one translation followed another. In 1948, *Tintin* weekly was born in France too,

Courtesy and © Casterman, S.A.

with a new associate French publisher: George Dargaud.

Hergé's breakdown was definitely behind him...

I entered the Lombard Co. as a writer, for Tibet's *Chick Bill the Cowboy*, for which I wrote about 1200 pages, and Franquin's *Modeste and Pompon*, a family strip on which I took over the writing from a man who was to become my friend and have an influence on my career: René Goscinny (he had left *Modeste* to spare the time for a new project: a little Gaul named Astérix...).

And I met Hergé.

He was no longer the lone artist/writer of *The XXe Siecle* who did not know how to apply colors. He was the Chairman of Hergé's Studios, an international company with a staff of 20 artists, secretaries, lawyers, and busy accountants. He now could sweeten his morning coffee with a few gold pieces, change the masterpieces hanging on his walls every Monday, or sign a personal book to the King of Belgium, who was a fan. Hergé first called me because he had sold the rights to *Tintin* to a moviemaker in France and faced a problem. That movie producer actually built the whole business on frozen money that he owned in Mediterranean countries like Yugoslavia. The main idea was to send Tintin, Captain Haddock, and Professor Calculus into the area, and hire "complementary" actors and technical crews on the spot: They would be paid in the local currency, and the movie could then be "reimported" to France without any problem. A writer had been hired to build a plot according to these demands. He did, and he did it well: the script was a genuine Agatha Christie-style enigma... but without an ending!

Tintin and the Mystery of the Golden Fleece (a live-action picture with French, Belgian, and Yugoslavian actors) had indeed become a *real* mystery with no solution. The writer had picked up his check and vanished, leaving the last 20 minutes empty. Hergé had read my stuff (at that time I had begun to write *Bernard Prince*, a series of detective novels illustrated by Hermann) and asked me to read the existing script and find a logical end to it. After three or four sleepless nights, I came up with what I thought could be acceptable. The producer and Hergé agreed, and I finished the story. After the (successful) preview, the first writer showed up again, announced that he had left for a while because of a sentimental problem he suddenly met—a Frenchman, you know—and that the final idea I wrote was exactly what he had in mind. In his opinion, I *had* to write that way; the existing part of the plot did not leave me any other solution. I was paid for my work but my name did not appear in the credits.

Hergé did not like that exclusion. He called me again, this time to write the French dialog in animated cartoons that were originally adapted from the books by an American writer with Hanna-Barbera, Charlie Shows. We worked as a team for two years in Brussels (and I *never* was able to instruct him correctly about European wines—"grape juice" in his opinion. But we got along pretty well for the rest). We completed 52 shorts of Tintin's adventures, they are still running now on French television. Then I had to adapt *The Seven Crystal Balls* and *The Temple of the Sun* as a feature-length animated cartoon released to theatres throughout Europe. And finally there was *Tintin and the Lake of the Sharks*, which I wrote by myself from A to Z, with Hergé's approval.

We had thus met a hundred times, worked together, travelled together, had lunches and dinners, and became real friends. That is what allows me to speak as a witness: President of Hergé's Studios or not, making an after-tax million a year or not, selling 80 million books in 24 languages or not (proven records), Hergé was still the kindest, warmest, and least pretentious person I ever met. He was a gentleman.

He was even greater as a man than as an artist, and he was a wonderful artist.

In 1982, China allowed Chang-Chon-Yen, the student who had helped Hergé with accurate information for *The Blue Lotus* in 1937, to leave the country (he's teaching art history in Peking) and go to visit Belgium and Hergé. They both burst into tears and hugged at Brussels Airport in front of the cameras. I can swear this was a hundred percent sincere. Any contemporary socialist-intellectual-cynical critic who could write (and they did) that the meeting was a publicity stunt is not even worth a spit on his Sunday shoes. None of them ever is.

Hergé died of leukemia a few months later. I had moved to the United States a year earlier and his death fortunately never seemed real to me. But I remember having been—for nine years—the Editor-In-Chief of *Tintin Magazine*. On the cover, one could read "...For young people between the ages of 7 to 77."

Hergé was only 76. For the first and only time in his wonderful life, he fell just short... n

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In His Own Words:

Winsor McCay on Life, Art, Animation... ...and the Danger of Greasy Foods

For many years important biographical details about Winsor McCay were obscured. These included data about his career—and even the year of his birth. McCay is, of course, one of American cartooning's most imposing figures. From his dream-oriented creations (Little Nemo, Dream of the Rarebit Fiend, and many other titles) with significance in the fields of graphics, symbolism, and comics, to his pioneering work in the development of animation, McCay's demand upon our attention is great and proper.

Hence the vacuum of knowledge concerning his art, much less the accolades his body of work is denied because of ignorance, is tragic. NEMO has unearthed three first-person articles by McCay, however, that serve to dispel much of the cloudiness surrounding the genius. All date from the 1920s, and we are happy to combine and reprint the significant portions of these articles for the first time since their original publication (the deleted portions concern technical, illustrated animation lessons, or puffery for recent projects).

The first source is Book 11 of the Illustrating and Cartooning Correspondence Course *of the Federal School, of which McCay was an advisor, and is entitled "Animation Art." The second is from Clare Briggs's 1924 book* How to Draw Cartoons *for which McCay wrote a letter explaining his methods of work and giving advice to younger cartoonists. The third is from "How I Originated Motion Picture Cartoons," an article in* Cartoons and Movies Magazine *of April, 1927. This article, with much biographical material, was written in his capacity as Member of the Advisory Board of the American Association of Cartoonists and Caricaturists.*

Herewith, then, in McCay's own words, an autobiography, his "secrets" behind his work, advice on everything ranging from perspective to greasy-food diets, and a documentation of the techniques he pioneered in animation—as well as his decision not to patent his processes, so as to further the art form.

Rick Marschall

ABOVE: Winsor McCay, ca. 1925.

Looking back over the years, a memory picture of the venerable Prof. John Goodeson, of Ypsilanti, Mich., comes to my consciousness. Prof. Goodeson was a great drawing teacher, but retired at an advanced age, feeling that all his teaching had gone for naught. Then a new idea of teaching perspective came to him and with the enthusiasm of renewed youth he gathered about him six youngsters who seemed to have talent for drawing, the idea being to 'try it on the dogs.' I was one of the dogs.

I was about 16 then. That was several years ago. You see, I was born September 26, 1871, at a lumber town called Spring Lake, Mich. I had never seen a street car nor an electric light prior to my 15th birthday. But I have always been fond of drawing, and when I had a chance to receive Goodeson's instruction I jumped at it.

Prof. Goodeson died without putting his thoughts into print. I remember once he said of me: 'If that young fellow doesn't smoke too many cigarettes the world is going to hear from him. He has absorbed all my teaching.'

My career began as a painter of pictorial signs and stage scenery. My first picture making was in connection with theatrical display advertising, first as a sign painter with the National Show Printing Company, and later as a scenic display artist for the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum. You see, my first work was in colors and I enjoyed it and made it pay from the start. I made a careful study of gorgeous scenic backgrounds against which I painted the figures required by the theatres. (During the five years in this work, I learned a lot about the show business that may have had much to do with my originating the animated cartoon. I am fully satisfied that the animated drawings of the future will be in tone and probably in life-like color.)

Eventually I became a comic artist and cartoonist. Whatever success I have attained I attribute largely to Prof. Goodeson's insistence upon the fundamentals of perspective.

If I were teaching amateur cartoonists, I would set up a cone, a sphere, a cylinder and a cube before my pupils and say, "Draw nothing but these things for the next two months. When you have learned to draw them well, you will be able to draw anything—including cartoons. For instance, if you can draw automobile wheels and if you can draw a cube you

can easily adapt it to the shape of an automobile. *It is fundamentally important to understand the figures of solid geometry from every possible angle before you attempt to draw modifications of those figures.*"

This dictum is bound to cause a storm of disapproval. A great many novices are impatient to break into print without going through an apprenticeship, without learning technique. And there are drawing teachers who say, "Never mind the perspective. You should get that with your eye."

If you aren't familiar with the principles of perspective and try to "get that with your eye," you waste a lot of grey matter in nervous strain. Once you grasp it the rest is clear sailing. Ask yourself, "From what vantage point will I view the thing I am about to draw?"

I admit I cannot draw any better than the average, but critics say that my knowledge of perspective makes my drawings look snappy.

Any ordinary artist with an active imagination can learn to draw cartoons by first mastering perspective—lines, form and shadows. When you draw the picture of a man standing on the ground, let him be on the ground, not somewhere up in the air. When you draw a building or a gang-plank or a locomotive, make it look like what it's supposed to represent. You need a sixth sense—a sense of substance—which tells you, for instance, that a well-constructed table stands firmly on the floor with all four legs; its top does not jut into the air like a sliding board.

I've often watched cartoonists sweating over their work, erasing, etc., the trouble having been they couldn't get a clear mental picture of the thing they wanted to draw. On the other hand a man like A.B. Frost—whom I consider the greatest comic draftsman in the history of this country—worked with the air of a man who knew what he was doing. He was careful in his backgrounds and perspective.

Too many young men today are plunging into the comic game under the delusion they don't need pen-and-ink technique. A few—a very few—get by with it, but the vast majority never get very far beyond the amateur stage. If I were starting over again, the first thing I'd do would be to make a thorough study of draftsmanship. I would learn perspective, then the human figure, both nude and clothed, and surround it with proper setting.

Comic artists don't have to *invent* characters. The funniest people are all around you, in the street cars, on the sidewalk, everywhere. Keep your eyes open. Almost anywhere you look, you'll see a funny-looking man or child. I know lots of fellows, who, if they appeared on the stage, would have made the audience laugh their heads off merely to see them, but on the street we don't notice them.

The biggest thing, after all, is to develop a knowledge of draftsmanship and cultivate your creative imagination. A magazine or a book or a course of instruction might be a very good aid, but your individual initiative is the most important.

I have found that most cartoonists can do their best work at the office. Seclusion may be better for the scientist and philosopher, but the cartoonist needs to rub elbows with his fellows and observe humanity intimately. The little noises of the office are worth more to the cartoonist than the music of the world's greatest orchestra. Of course, most cartoonists do *some* of their work at home; when they do, they miss the stimulus of suggestions from the "innocent by-stander." My home, by the way, is at Sheepshead Bay, Long Island, during the summer and at the St. George Hotel, Brooklyn, N.Y., the rest of the year.

Just a few suggestions: You can work better if you refrain from eating a lot of rich, greasy, highly-seasoned or soft food. King Louis XVI of France escaped from a mob during the French Revolution, but was recaptured and later guillotined because he waited so long for a rich dinner to be cooked that fellow-countrymen penetrated his disguise. More than one cartoonist has fallen down in his work because of dining too sumptuously.

Keep drawing all the time. Save your sketches and notice how much improvement you have been making. Make yourself familiar with the proportions of the human figure, and remember that the most ordinary character will appear funnier with accurate and appropriate backgrounds.

And keep up to date. Study the fashions in wearing apparel, in cars and in other things. If you put a 1914 model in a modern cartoon, people will notice it and say, "He's slipping back."

Some time ago I was asked to make a cartoon in a campaign for safety at railroad crossings. Before putting a pencil to the paper, I looked through the day's newspapers for pictures of the very latest speed-wagons. I could easily have drawn a car from memory or from a recent model, but I wanted to make the lesson as effective as possible and I dug out the newest possible style.

Another thing: Choose a character and stick to it. I have never been so happy as while drawing *Little Nemo*, which I originated 20 years ago. In fact, I've always enjoyed my work. My

Collection of Rick Marschall

Caricature of McCay by Cliff Sterrett, his co-worker on the Bennett papers in New York, ca. 1911.

Collection of Rick Marschall

first newspaper job was with the *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, at the age of 28. I stayed there two-and-a-half years, doing general sketching assignments—fires, murders (X marks the spot), conventions, etc.

Then I was with the *Cincinnati Enquirer* for five years, chiefly on the general assignments. Just before leaving I created a color-page comic entitled *Tale of the Jungle Imps*, which resulted in offers from New York papers. For eight years I worked on the *New York Herald*, originating *Sammy Sneeze, Hungry Henrietta, Dream of the Rarebit Fiend, Poor Jake, Dull Care*, and *Little Nemo in Slumberland.*

I switched to the *New York American* and stayed with the Hearst organization 12 years. At first I drew comics. Then Arthur Brisbane remarked, "McCay is serious, not funny." So I was put to work drawing half-page cartoons to illustrate Brisbane's editorials. Meanwhile, I was receiving bushels of letters begging me to revive *Little Nemo*. The Hearst people wanted me to do so, but the *Herald* (now the *Herald-Tribune*) held the title copyright and would not permit *Little Nemo* to be resuscitated unless I drew him for the *Herald-Tribune* (both newspaper and its syndicate), which I finally agreed to do.

I have two children, Winsor, Jr., who is also a cartoonist, and Marion, now Mrs. Raymond Moniz, the wife of a former major on the staff of General O'Ryan of the 27th Division. Marion has a son, Raymond, Jr.

So much for family history. My point is this: Winsor, Jr., as a small boy picked up several flippers of "Magic Pictures" (the ancestor of the movies) from the street and brought them home to me.

I first came to see the possibility of making moving pictures for entertaining an audience by observing one of these little flipper advertising pads, where a man in a mackintosh was made to raise his right hand, unfasten a flap at his throat and drop his hand to his side again.

I decided that, if that could be shown by photography, something more interesting could be done by means of a drawn figure. Taking a little pad of semi-transparent paper, I went to work and, on 24 pages, soon had worked out in motion cartoon the picture of my Little Flip figure, raising a cigar to his mouth for a puff. A half hour's lively sketching satisfied me that animated cartoons could be produced and thrown on a screen in the same manner as a photographic film was projected, and within an hour I was laying plans by which I worked out the first successful animated cartoon.

From this germ I evolved the modern cartoon movies, in 1909. I made 4,000 drawings of Little Nemo move; they were flashed on the screen in Hammerstein's Theatre, in old New York. The characters included Little Nemo and Flip, the Princess, Doctor Pill and the Imp, moving in a picture drama. It was pronounced very life-like, but my audience declared it was not a drawing but that the pictures were photographs of real children.

In my next attempt, to avoid any such possibility, I drew a great ridiculous mosquito, pursuing a sleeping man, peeking through the key hole and pouncing on him over the transom. My audiences were pleased, but declared the mosquito was operated by wires to get the effect before the camera.

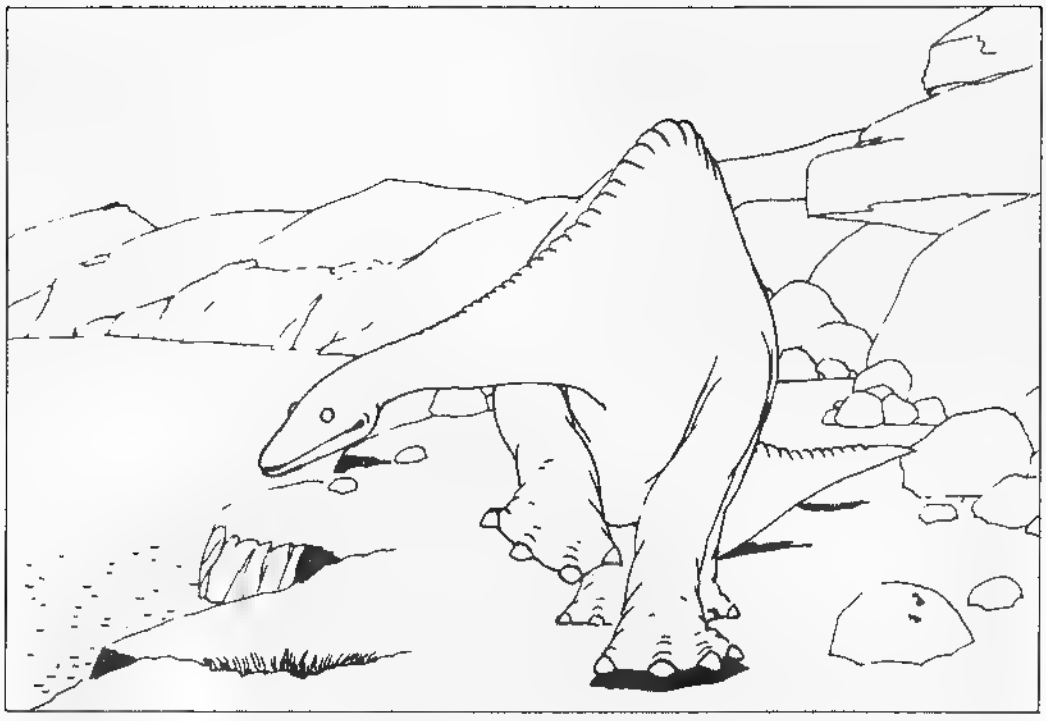
This would have been funny if it had not been so tragic. In my third and successful attempt, I decided I would satisfy the skeptics. To do this I drew my famous Gertie, the prehistoric monster, the original of which lived 13 million years ago. I made her eat boulders and pull up trees by the roots and throw an elephant into the sea. Gertie was made to drink a lake dry and lie down and roll over and obey commands which I emphasized by cracking a whip. At last I had people convinced that they were looking at a picture drawn by hand, in which an animal was made to look like a living, breathing creature.

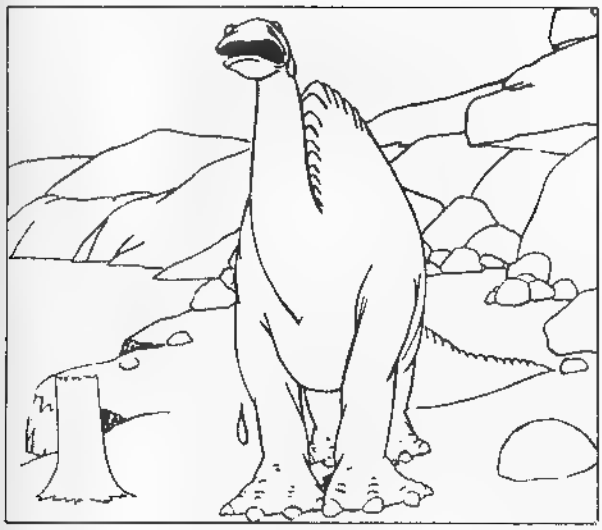
I exhibited this myself in vaudeville. I discovered the animated cartoon in 1910 and worked out first Little Nemo, then the mosquito, but arrived at my real success with Gertie, the initial performance of which was put on at the Palace Theatre in Chicago in March, 1914, and the following week at Hammerstein's in New York City, where it had a seven-week run. Later Gertie and I toured every big city east of the Mississippi, explaining the new invention to many thousands of people.

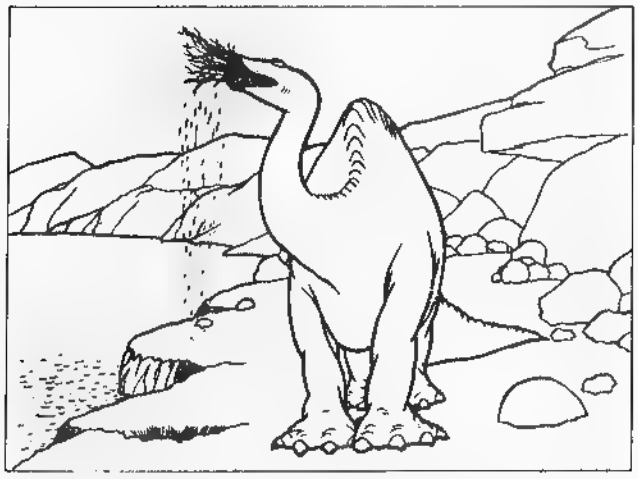
In these first performances I explained the act as a new creation. Gertie was made to come out of a cave at my command and go through her stunts. When the great Dinosaur first came into the picture, the audience said it was a papermaché animal with men inside of it and with a scenic background. As the production progressed they noticed that the leaves on the trees were blowing in the breeze, and that there were rippling waves on the surface of the water, and when the elephant was thrown into the lake the water was seen to splash. This convinced them that they were seeing something new—that the presentation was actually from a set of drawings. It had taken four years of work, three sets of pictures and hundreds and thousands of drawings to really establish the animated cartoon. Five years was, after all, a comparatively short time to establish a new invention. Once established, it was universally accepted. I have never tried to restrict its use by copyrights or process patents. It is my wish that it should be universally used and I am glad to pass on the information I possess, as originator of the idea, to all draftsmen interested in the study, with the idea that many minds working upon its development may sooner bring about most complete results.

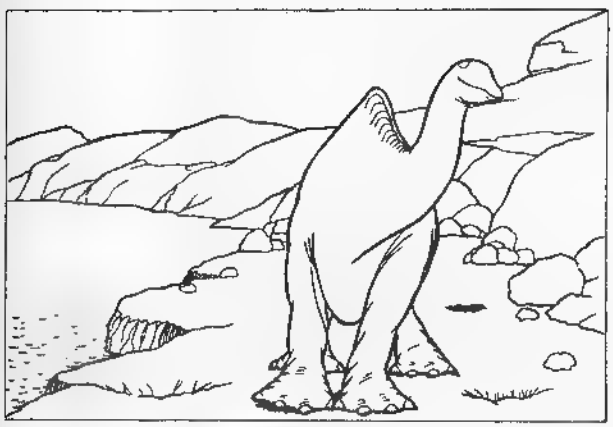
In the past, people have been willing to go into a gallery and pay admission to see a great painting. The *Angelus* was exhibited and people paid one dollar to view the great painting. Let the modern artist take a good look ahead. The time is coming when people will not be

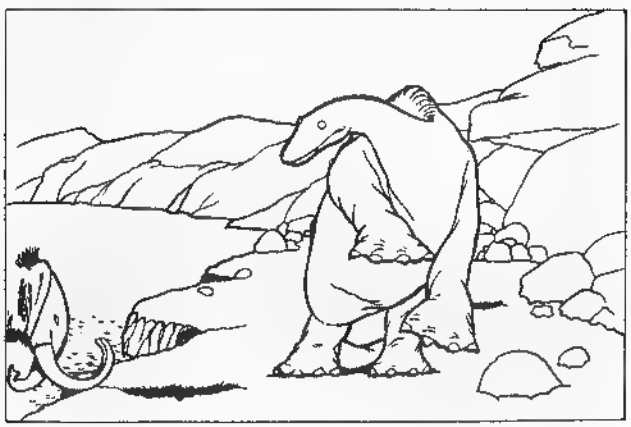
Five images of Gertie, the Trained Dinosaur, McCay's landmark creation, photographed from the original art. McCay drew every element of every panel individually. He toured the vaudeville stage with this cartoon, posing as a ringmaster, calling out "commands" at the appropriate moments for her to "obey" on film.

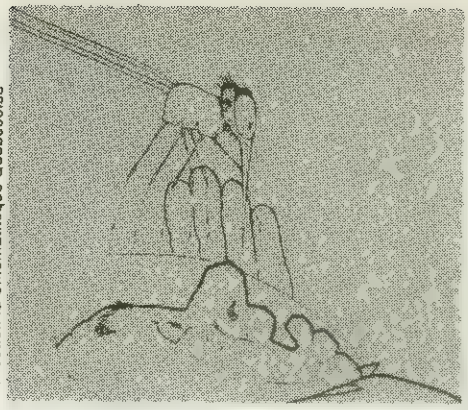






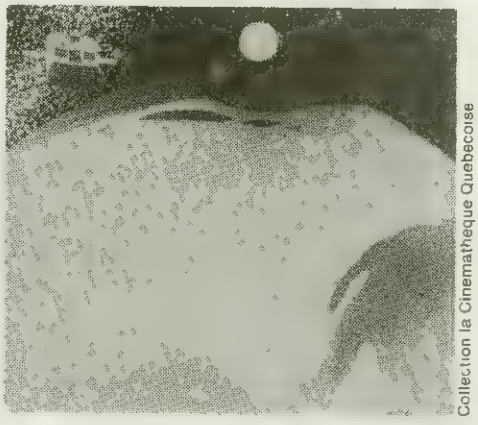






Collection la Cinematheque Quebecoise

A frame from McCay's 1912 cartoon, *The Story of a Mosquito*, detailing the consequences of the insect's encounter with a drunk.



Collection la Cinematheque Quebecoise

A frame from *The Flying House*, 1921. McCay's son Robert was listed as creator of the three-part *Dream of the Rarebit Fiend* cartoon of which this was a part, but Winsor McCay likely had a major hand in it. Later experimental comic strips signed "Bob McCay" or "Winsor McCay, Jr." were evidently of the senior's hand as well.

content to view merely a stationary picture, but when they pay their dollar will expect the peasant in the *Angelus* to take up his wheelbarrow and walk.

The Ben Hur race will be made in animation, the horses will really have to move. The time is coming when those viewing galloping horses will expect to see the horses actually gallop. People are soon going to be educated to such a degree that they will not be interested in pictures that stand still.

For inventive genius ready not only to originate new ideas, but capable of working out methods of putting them into execution there is an almost untried realm of new possibilities.

The field need not be confined to humorous presentations, but may be varied in a thousand ways. Of course, intricate drawings will require more labor in their execution. The task looks stupendous, with its thousand of drawings eaten up in a few minutes of presentation, but this very fact affords the employment to so many workers.

The big opportunity in animated cartoons is for the man who can plan series after series, evolve the jokes, plan the action, inject humor. He may or may not be a skilled draftsman; he must, at least know the rudiments of drawing, and the more he knows the better.

Then, there must be skilled draftsmen to actually draw the pictures and make them either funny or attractive, as the case may be, using his expert draftsmanship and knowledge of art as a basis for a claim for higher remuneration. Then there must be the artisans of craft, who can trace and duplicate and detail the pictures planned and sketched by the more skilled draftsman.

Starting in the subordinate rank, there is an opportunity of rising by natural gradations to the positions requiring skill, ingenuity and initiative. In my opinion, there will open up a new field for the training and development of draftsmen and for the thinkers along original lines.

A person must be able to figure the movements of an object down to small fractions of a second, and draw a series of outlines so that, when thrown on the screen, the action will be properly timed.

When Gertie was lying on her side I wanted her to breathe and I tried my watch, and also stop watch, to judge how long she was inhaling and how long it took her to exhale. I could come to no exact time until one day I happened to be working where a large clock with a big second dial accurately marked the intervals of time. I stood in front of this clock and inhaled and exhaled and found that, imitating the great Dinosaur, I inhaled in four seconds and exhaled in two. The result was that when the picture was run, instead of the Dinosaur panting as you would expect, she was breathing very easily. The breathing was shown by the sides of the monster expanding and contracting like a bellows.

When I drew Gertie breathing, I only drew her breathing once, but I photographed that set of drawings over 15 times.

The humorous theme may especially appeal to you and it is certainly a most fascinating study to create humorous figures and make them do funny things. People like this sort of a thing. Young fellows, with a tendency towards vaudeville entertainment work, are likely to make their start, at least, along the line of humorous animated cartoons.

I have said that each worker in animated art has his own individual ideas of what is most interesting. I am very sure this animated cartooning is in its infancy. Much more marvelous results are to be developed. I can see wonderful possibilities and hope to work some of them out myself. An artist may paint the portrayal of an ideal life. Moving picture producers have, so far, reproduced the real. The artist may put life into his ideal.

All processes are now crude and advances must be made by slow degrees. A great new art is just being developed. I laid aside my comic presentation after the sinking of the Lusitania and put in two years' work on approximately 25 thousand drawings necessary to represent the tragic event in animated pictures.

In this presentation I used wash and crayon, as well as pen and ink. When we came to photograph these drawings the operator commented on the fact that he worked an hour photographing 129 drawings that would go through the machine in eight seconds. These drawings cost me eight weeks of hard labor. In animated drawing, as in everything else, perfection comes by working slowly to definite results.

The part of my life of which I am proudest is the fact that I was the first man in the world to make animated cartoons. One or two other cartoonists have claimed this honor, or it has been claimed for them, but the facts are so well known that the claims have never been taken seriously. Pat Sullivan (*Felix the Cat*), who is the best-known animator today, didn't hesitate a second in saying "Winsor McCay" when an interviewer asked him the other day, "Who originated movie cartoons?"

Artists haven't yet taken animation seriously enough. When they do, they will make some marvelous pictures. I went into the business and spent thousands of dollars developing this new art. It required considerable time, patience and careful thought—timing and drawing the pictures. I animated even the "still" figures, which some movie cartoonists don't do. Unless all the live figures vibrate, the picture is not really animated.

This is the most fascinating work I have ever done—this business of making cartoons live on the screen. n

OPPOSITE: One of McCay's classic dream pages, ca. 1904.

DREAM OF THE RAREBIT FIEND
BY SILAS
OH! I DO LOVE YOU YOU KNOW I DO, DON'T YOU SWEETIE? I LOVE YOU MORE THAN I CAN SAY IT.
I'M SO HAPPY TO HEAR YOU SAY SO BUT DO YOU REALLY LOVE HONESTLY DO -
YES I DO, TRULY AND HONESTLY I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I WOULD NOT WANT TO LIVE UNLESS I HAD YOU WITH ME ALL THE TIME BY
DOES YOUR HEART THROB FOR ME WHEN I AM OUT OF YOUR SIGHT? DO YOU PINE FOR ME?
OH! DUCKEY DARLING I LIVE BLT FOR YOU YOU KNOW I PINE FOR MY LITTLE PANSY BLOSSOM UMHUH!
YE E E ES BUT YOU DONT SAY YOUR HEART THROBS FOR ME NE-E-OW
THAT'S ENOUGH! .M DONE! I CANT STAND IT NOPE
UM UM YUM YUM OOH IS MY
UM AM MI?-UU DOON SAUM UM I MI. OOH DUN SAY. DUH YUM HEARTUM MUM
BREAK AWAY! WHAT DO YOJ THINK I AM?
OH DEAR! THERE'S THE RUG. WHAT AILS IT? OH! OH!
OH! OH! WHAT-WHO AH IS „T?
OH! HELP, OH! PAPA COME! MAMA! OH! OH! HE-P! OH
OH! GRACIOUS SAKES ALIVE! OH MURDER! OH SOME ONE! OH!
OH! HELP! OH! OH I'M FAINTING
OH I'M SO GLAD, I'M SO GLAD IT WAS A DREAM. OH! WHAT A TERRIBLE DREAM. THAT HORRID RAREBIT I ATE - AH! CAUSED THAT OH! OH! MERCY I'M GLAD
SILAS

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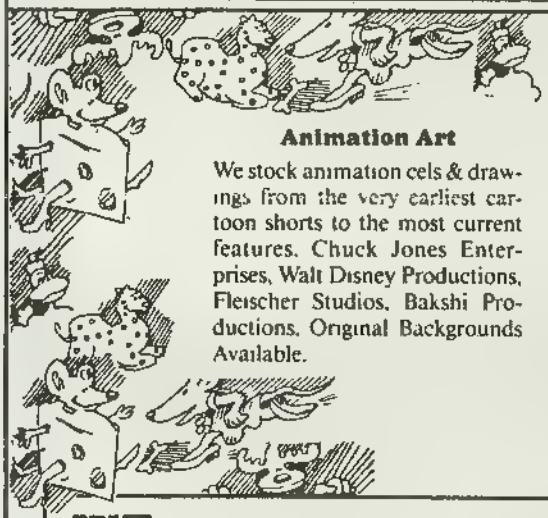

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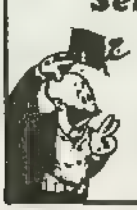


THE CARTOON CARNIVAL

408 Bickmore Drive, Wallingford, PA 19086 (215) 876-1292

The Panel Art of J.R. Williams

Drawings from the Collection of Rick Marschall

Reveries of a Rumpled Age

by
Donald Phelps

NOBODY WATCHES THE BIRDIE

They are always peering,
The kids: skinny, bespectacled,
  plump, earnest, aloof,
Standing on their raft;
Or, the cowboys,
Squatting, reclining,
Around the campfire, the flames of which
increase their look of age.
Each separate in the orbit
  of his own posture
  from the others,
(Not even sure they want to be drawn)
  That they *are* a picture.
Peering with their popeyes,
The mouths either talking, or
  about to,
Showing edges of rabbit-teeth.
Their eyes, their mouths, peering,
Trying to get a hold on something
  (even if not the Truth),
Beyond the campfire's edge, the horizon-line
  of the raft.
With clumsy, dogged patience, extraordinary
  authority.
(He never cheated them of that)
And better his hand go dead,
His brain with it,
The half-second before he'd permit
  the first flicker of
  condescension
Toward them,
And their energetic, old, hard-working clothes,
The wrinkles at the arm-pits,
The bags at the knees and crotch,
All very concerned, all going about
  their business,
Of being alive.
(They're not even sure they *want* to be drawn.)

I recall, reading the single-panel studies by J.R. Williams in the *New York World-Telegram* as a child, my curious feeling of intimidation at not being able to get the point. Not "what the drawing was about," which was almost too easy: the swarming, or eccentrically composed, content, its can't-be-bothered-right-now preoccupation, contributed to my bother. More accurately, I found myself having to wonder *where* the point was, where I was, or was supposed to be, in relation to these drawings.

These questions were answered so affably, so urbanely by H.T. Webster, or Clare Briggs, or Gluyas Williams, other distinguished single panelers over whose work, in the *Herald Tribune* or the *Evening Sun*, I can still remember my father chuckling and spluttering with laughter. J.R. Williams, however, had no armchair to offer the reader; no one lined up, smiling. I felt that these panels represented a door or window left open, with not so much as a wink of direct invitation, or acknowledgement of any reader's presence.

Out Our Way was the collective title, as well

Collection of Rick Marschall

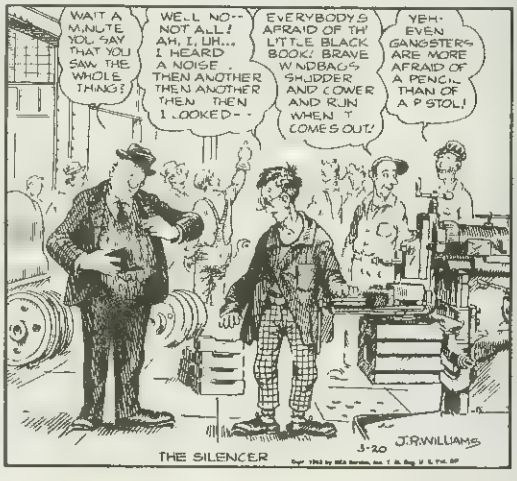
J.R. Williams ca. 1943.

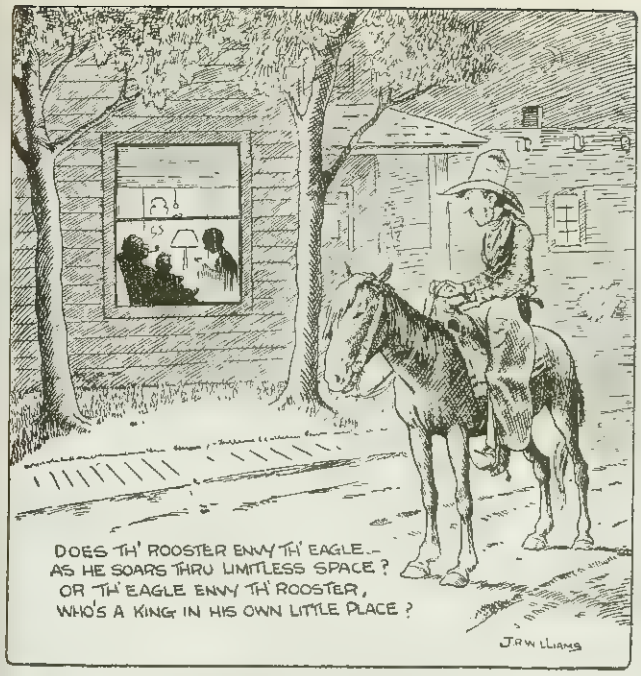
as the title of the Sunday comic strip, more crisply drawn and more familiarly amusing. There was no balcony seat; you found yourself in the thick of things, along with Williams: a clamoring, gesticulating family group, a bunch of factory hands griping and expostulating to, or about, a foreman called "The Bull of the Woods" who seemed in a perennial state of near-collapse (in close competition with his defeatist overalls) at the wanton disorderliness of events. Or an assortment of cowboys who must have been, even as teenagers, more tired, older, more roughly branded by their experience than any tenderfoot replicas from Republic Pictures could seem after decades, as they floundered across a raw cliff face after a maverick, seen dancing along the panel's upper border.

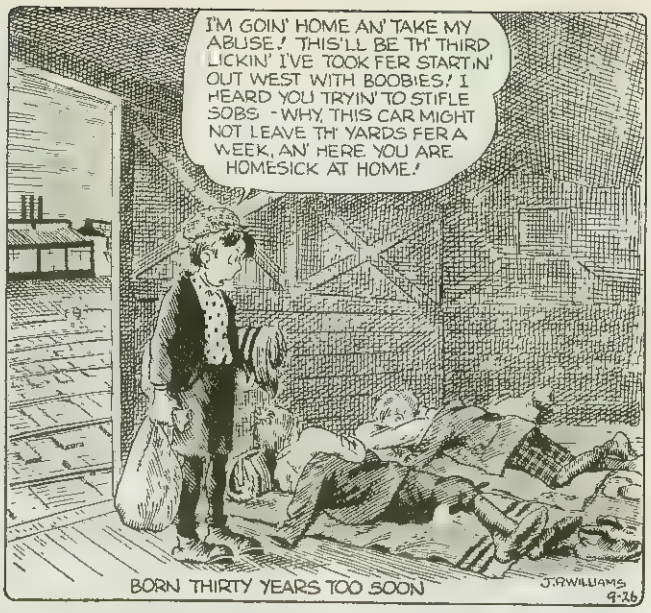
Disconcertingly, vignettes like these seemed to stream *beyond* the edges of Williams's daily panels, which offered, themselves, only the most provisional enclosures: no stage spotlights, no arenas, for varieties of bull-and-bear-baiting; but momentary viewfinders for an existence which, like that renegade calf, seemed repeatedly beyond lassoing distance of the bone-aching, exasperated pursuers. Was there, ever, a stage center? All the jostling and scrambling seemed directed toward hanging onto one's own space; the key dialogue in a scene often came from left or right of a panel: two factory wiseacres, tendering their philosophic glosses on some kibitzer accidentally scorching his nose with an acetylene torch; or, a manager, in serene auto-hypnosis, oblivious to his ringing phone. More often than not, once the eye picked its way to the "payoff line," through an array of postures which were virtual acts of incivility toward harmony itself, there was no payoff in any accustomed sense; not in the acceptable meaning of a punch-line, or a sententious zinger, the implication of which is: "Oh, it's been put into words at last!"

Williams's panels bristled with words, however, as they swarmed with wrinkles. Nothing brought his compositions and figures to bay, reminding them of their place; instead, even the wit, or joke, or flat-voiced summation by a younger brother or old factory hand, came from within, and remained within, the situation; not reducing it, not controlling it, offering no you-and-I-*we*-know-better winks, or nudges; but rather, directing the eye back to those ungainly gestures, the lurching, unguided purposefulness of the action. In a very simple-looking panel, entitled "The Shadow" —a mother quick-marching her son, trusty-style, to the back door (he is carrying a small tower of crackers; the mother, in her few, but well-edged words, has just finished cleaning "the whole house")—you feel an emotional authenticity which defies the seams of a quaint-homey-gag-situation package. There is too much bedrock exhaustion and exasperation in her little speech, and her overly stiff carriage, underscored by the weary, practical, not quite-resigned lines of her ankle-length print dress; and there's too much guilty awkwardness in the son's face, his gingerly protection of his cracker-tower—even in the way his shirt spills over his belt—for the impeccably blueprinted "genre humor" with which Webster would have regaled us, wrapped in the gloss-paper of "universality," "Americana" has been relinquished in favor of ornery particularity.

I am not interested in denigrating unjustly an artist of Webster's exceeding craft and dispatch and wit; or, for that matter, men like Clare Briggs, or the often excellent Gluyas Williams, when I say that the word "packaging" sums up much of the difference between their work and J.R. Williams's ever-accosting, unceremonious art. For what the best single-panel work of these men delivered the reader was a cunning distillation of certain "typical" attitudes, situations, daily confrontations, with the style as a high-enameled maraschino cherry, and a discreet lemon-squeeze, for this middle-class self-consolation highball, of patronization (scorn would have equaled lemon pits). Norman Rockwell's name is often clipped to such sentiments; but Rockwell was absorbed imaginatively in his subject matter, which he accorded a sort of rhapsodic expansion, such as I do not feel in Webster or his like. Most of the others were contributors to the old *Life* magazine, after World War I, and not long before the razing of its humorous-Americana edifice by the incense-scented torch of Eustace Tilley, of *The New Yorker*. Some of them, like Gluyas Williams and Gardner Rea, preceded others, like Webster and Crawford Young (the original *Clarence*) sashaying on to *The New Yorker*'s nearest counterpart among daily papers, the *Tribune*, later the *Herald Tribune*: All headed for the depot where Suburban Humor was waiting with the car, bags packed.


WAIT A MINUTE YOU SAY THAT YOU SAW THE WHOLE THING?
WELL NO-- NOT ALL! AH, I, UH... I HEARD A NOISE . THEN ANOTHER THEN ANOTHER THEN THEN I LOOKED--
EVERYBODY'S AFRAID OF TH' LITTLE BLACK BOOK! BRAVE WINDBAGS SHUDDER AND COWER AND RUN WHEN IT COMES OUT!
YEH- EVEN GANGSTERS ARE MORE AFRAID OF A PENCIL THAN OF A PISTOL!
J.R.WILLIAMS
3-20
THE SILENCER


DOES TH' ROOSTER ENVY TH' EAGLE.--
AS HE SOARS THRU LIMITLESS SPACE ?
OR TH' EAGLE ENVY TH' ROOSTER,
WHO'S A KING IN HIS OWN LITTLE PLACE ?
J.R.WILLIAMS


I'M GOIN' HOME AN' TAKE MY ABUSE ! THIS'LL BE TH' THIRD LICKIN' I'VE TOOK FER STARTIN' OUT WEST WITH BOOBIES ! I HEARD YOU TRYIN' TO STIFLE SOBS - WHY, THIS CAR MIGHT NOT LEAVE TH' YARDS FER A WEEK, AN' HERE YOU ARE HOMESICK AT HOME !
BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON
J.R.WILLIAMS
9-26

YOU GOT A SHIRT ON, SO IT'S BEST YOU GO TO TH' DOOR AN' JUST APOLOGIZE AN' TELL HIM IT WAS SUCH A HOT DAY WE SIMPLY COULDN'T RESIST TAKIN' A DIP ~~~
SAY, J'S 'CAUSE I WAS QUICK-WITTED ENOUGH TO GRAB MY SHIRT ON TH' RUN, DON'T THINK I CAN BE USED !
OH, I DON'T THINK HE'LL SAY MUCH-- LET'S YOO-HOO HIM OUT AN' NEGOTIATE WITH HIM FROM HERE... OR FURTHER !
G.MME THAT SHIRT--LOAN IT TO ME ! I'M HUNGRY AN' CHILLED--- I'LL GIT OUR CLO'ES ! ER AH-LEAVE TH' GATE OPEN...WIDE OPEN !
6-10
BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON
J.R.WILLIAMS

COME ON, DAN, ROLL OUT ! IT'S THAT DANG BUSYBODY, THE STORK, AGAIN !
BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON
J.R.WILLIAMS
4-6

COME ON, COME ON ! YOUR HOSSES ARE SADDLED.. JUNIPER SPRINGS HAS GONE DRY AN WE GOT TO GIT THEM CATTLE OUT O' THERE YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL A FEW DAYS.
BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON
J.R.WILLIAMS
2-14

TELL YOUR MA, HOMER, THAT THEM FISH IS HAND CAUGHT AT WILLOW DAM.... NOW, ESTHER, YOU WANTED TWO POUNDS OF COCONUT CRISP--
NO--A HALF A POUND-- UH-AH-DON'T YOU HAVE THEM IN BOXES ER-A-CARTONS ? HAVE YOU ANY COOKIES THAT COME IN CARTONS ?
BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON
J.R.WILLIAMS
9-27

SONORA JOE AND PIÑON CHARLIE! DID YUH GIT A GOOD LOOK AT TH' FELLER WHO DONE THIS ?
NO- HE HAD A BLUE BANDANA OVER THE LOWER PART OF HIS FACE. THEY HAD JUST ORDERED ME TO THROW UP MY HANDS WHEN HE STEPPED IN THE DOOR. HE DIDN'T SHOOT AT THE YOUNGER ONE-HE JUST SAID TO HIM -"NOW YOU GIT" AND THEY WERE BOTH GONE BEFORE I REALIZED WHAT WAS HAPPENING.
THE ANONYMOUS BENEFACTOR.
J.R.WILLIAMS 12-4

J.R. Williams's most radical departure from his contemporaries lies with his admission of *text*, in force, the ubiquity and the potency of language, to his drawings, thus admitting a full head of narrative density into the simplest depictions, which, in another artist, would be muffed by the insistence of crystalization and encapsulation within the immediate image. His alertness to energy guides his Chekhov-like instinct for plot in the most pebble-like-appearing vignettes: the constant, bizarre knots which the "ordinary" entails. During the '20s this was registered in his work as a penchant for Louis L'Amour-Luke Short-type Western narratives. In the course of which, in 1925, occurred a pile-driver image: The corpses of two would-be bank robbers, sprawled on the floor of the cowtown bank. It is shocking, and moving—shocking in *being* moving—today; because of the way the dead men's postures catch the *residual* energy of their recent life; recalling, in this respect, Kipling's "Danny Deever." In the later panels, however, the prevalent force is of the stories which people manufacture daily.

Time after time, he seems to recognize the key to his own art as lodged very deep in ordinary people's scrambles and grapples to unravel, or slice, those preposterous knots, to make sense of things' and persons' perpetual displacement. Such displacement is apostrophized in titles which appeared under the collective title *Out Our Way*: "Heroes Are Made—Not Born"; "Why Mothers Get Gray"; "Born Thirty Years Too Soon". Usually, what they are entangled in is their own history; a lockstep parade of gaucherie and importunity and defeat, which Williams (for all the laborious, whittling solicitude of his drawing) deftly, and gently, turns aside. For it is their willingness to contend, and the ways of contending which they improvise, which fascinate him, which commend his art.

All are upheld by the authority of language, always a-sweat with its attempts to cope, so that no room is ever permissible for catch-phrase or aphorism: I don't know of one tagline to which his work ever gave birth. Targets are not the issue: When his factory hands align themselves to discuss some momentary peculiarity, or habitual perverseness, in one of their number, the tone is totally without the curdled-puritan baiting, the wise-guy sadism, which TAD (a fine artist in his own right, and, at his best, a preceptor of Williams; the only such, within Williams's life-span, I can think of) fostered, and set the basic patterns for, in his series *Indoor Sports*. Williams's men may complain and they may note with scornful wonder at times, but never merely to shrivel some elected scapegoat. What engages them, what fires them, is the arresting oddity of such people being as they are, of the situation in which they can flourish. They, all of Williams's characters, are expert talkers-to-the-occasion: not to mull and to ruminate, like the philosophic derelicts of William Saroyan's plays or Carné and Prevert's films; not to lament and rhapsodize, like the bar-flies of O'Casey; but, demi-poets that they are (which is not to call them "unsuccessful" or "half-assed" poets; but only to suggest that the ultimate making of poetry is not their purpose, and does not inform their drive) they aim at finding some significant shape where there may be none, of simply assuring themselves that what happens every day is, bit by bit, manageable. "Ye gods, the power of language!" a tenderfoot exclaims, as the seasoned puncher yells: "Tether-'erl" to somebody off-panel, with splendid inanity, but equally splendid hope—since that calf is still some four yards out of their reach, up that mountain face.

All of them are self-elected artists of the everyday, which is why none of them has any time to lapse into the quick-frozen typicality, the serene acquiesence to their place in history, of the nostalgic image. Nostalgia is not far from what is currently referred to as "camp," kin that both involve a slackening and subsiding of the imagination. But, invention is always at hand, or burgeoning in the will to get some articulate shape from day-by-day enigmas, in Williams cartoons (*Out: Our Way* would be still another formulation for that title). The boy, reclining in an arm-chair, a hole cut in his newspaper so that he can monitor, "unobserved," as his mother dryly notes, the effects of suspending a dead bug from the window-shade string, directly over the fish-bowl. Or, the older sister who fashions elaborate dummies (which seem almost ready to join the live cast) from the clothes strewn about the house by her kid brother—with a zeal and ingenuity equaling, if not exceeding, that of George Segal, the replica sculptor. What she is doing, is very near, indeed, to the self-sculpture which the various principals of

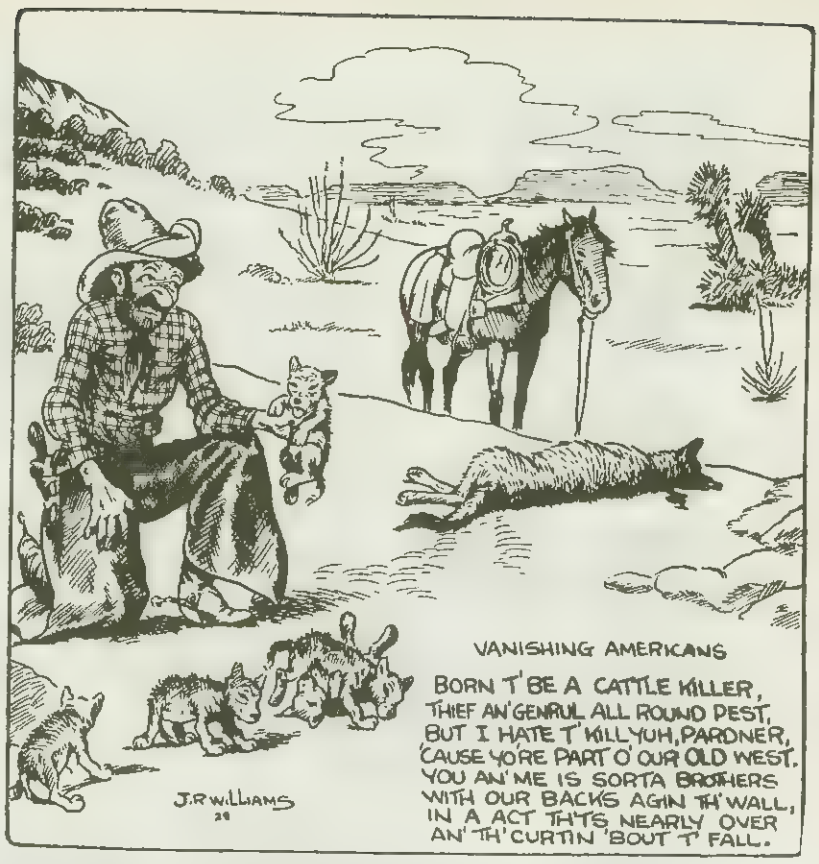
NO—IT DIDN'T BREAK TH SKIN! IT JUST BRUISED IT A LITTLE
I SEEN TH CLAMP BREAK LOOSE BUT I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD FLY LIKE THAT.
WHEN I WAS A KID MY OL' MAN WAS MY GREATEST HERO, TILL TH NIGHT OF TH' FIRE, WHEN HE JUMPED OUT OF A WINDOW AN' TH' TAIL OF HIS NIGHT-SHIRT CAUGHT ON A NAIL. EVERY TIME I SEEN HIM AFTER THAT I'D THINK OF HIM TRYIN TO GIT OUT OF THAT NIGHT SHIRT
IT DOES TAKE SOMETHIN' AWAY FROM A KING, TO LET PEOPLE SEE THAT UNDER TH' ROBE OF DIGNITY IS TH' SHAPE OF A SAND HILL CRANE.
THE KING'S HORSES
J.R.WILLIAMS

Out Our Way practice daily upon their own forms, and clothing; and represents, beautifully, the will to effect some impress on the damp, down-drawn sand of here-and-now. They are as devoted both to having and to *making* their say, as the characters of the *Spoon River Anthology*, only not willing to wait so long. And such resolution has to do, I think, with the panel-after-panel impression of a life to which the merest formula could act as no more than a momentary set of ice-tongs. I wonder still, looking at those cartoons today, not only at the bounty of detail but at the way his style, so cranky and so solicitous of data likely to be binned as "superfluous" by many another cartoonist, here suggests that "styleless style" of which Truman Capote spoke in a *Paris Review* interview, many years ago.

The art which Williams elects is truly the most self-effacing, self-diffusing of arts: that of the photographer, as registered in the desperate, sixes-and-sevens attitudes and compositions of Jacob Riis, or the graven ungainliness of Walker Evans, decades later. Not for anything would he, Williams, presume any authority, in the manipulative sense, on his own part as an artist, when his work constantly puts him amid a conflux of artists.

"Authority" of any certifiable kind, in Williams's life-long book, involves the power to make one's self heard, and the sense of what is being said, recognized; status is only attainable, usually on the most temporary level, through the leverage of justice, putting across your case; one reason only, among several, why I think the Outer Way people would probably have greeted many of Webster's drawings, or any art which attributed excessive meekness to them, with a super-charged version of that open-mouthed stare, and outflung hands, which express something *just* short of surrender to an avalanche of improbability. "You're extravagant with labor—that's all yer extravagant with!" a small boy—the "little snip," Williams's probable self-projection at age 10—retorts to his mother, who has admonished him on his gardening technique. People are never settled in any station of their ages, social roles, or the presumptive authority of either, as, for example, the currently underrated Booth Tarkington never wearied of noting, and documenting. *Lèse majesté*, Williams would have us know, is prescribed by maturity itself, and we begin to mature from the cradle. "I ain't afraid to let them see the kind of feller *I* am!" a very small boy, who will ultimately become identified in the panels as "The Worry Wart," snaps at his older brother, and well-weathered guardian, who has just aimed a semi-pious jibe at the kid for sneaking into a revival meeting, under the tent. One's own nature, in other words, is the sovereign authority every

THEM'S FINE! THAT'S GREAT STUFF! YOU SHOULD BE WORKIN AT THAT
THANKS— I PRACTICE ALL TH TIME— I-I MEAN, AT HOME, OF COURSE
TH' BULL O' TH' WOODS DON'T KNOW TH' FIRST PRINCIPLE ABOUT ART— HOW DOES HE KNOW THAT GUY SHOULD BE WORKIN' AT ART?
WHY, BECAUSE HE DOES KNOW TH' MACHINIST TRADE, AND HE KNOWS THAT GUY SHOULD BE WORK'N AT SOMETHIN' ELSE AN ART EDITOR MIGHT SAY HE'S A GOOD MACHINIST
THE BOOSTER
8-2


VANISHING AMERICANS
BORN T' BE A CATTLE KILLER, THIEF AN' GENRUL ALL ROUND PEST, BUT I HATE T' KILL YUH, PARDNER, 'CAUSE YO'RE PART O' OUR OLD WEST. YOU AN' ME IS SORTA BROTHERS WITH OUR BACKS AGIN TH' WALL, IN A ACT TH'TS NEARLY OVER AN' TH' CURTIN 'BOUT T' FALL.
J.R.WILLIAMS

Williams person learns to recognize from early on. "When I was a kid," a factory sage confides, "my ol' man was th' greatest hero, till th' night of th' fire when he jumped out of a window, and his nightshirt caught on a nail. Every time I seen him after that, I'd think of him trying to get out of that nightshirt!" And: "It does take somethin' away from a king," annotates his co-worker, "to let people see that under th' robe of dignity is th' shape of a sand-hill crane." The pair is observing the startlingly shapely leg of the foreman whose shin has been bruised by a broken gear. Is it obligatory to add that, as they always do in Williams's panels, the two sideline philosophers scale and locate themselves at least as precisely as what, or whom, they are discussing? That neither has any ready-made, freshly dusted-off persona to offer any reader? For the hard-earned nature of whatever "character" each can claim is attested in their faces' lines, the slope of their shoulders, the loose readiness of their drooping arms. Nor—I hardly feel obliged to add—is the injured foreman, or any of the clustered co-workers, the "target" of the onlookers' comments. We are not engaged in the skeet-shooting of humorous deflation, but in the search for a thread—of remembrance, identification, which may no longer be there, or here; although the circumstances are not remote, but as immediate as faith. The seeking out of common terrain, of context, is what we are drawn into; for Williams entertained no piety whatsoever toward cliques, those in-the-know, or, so it would seem, solidarity status in general. There is no point, after all, to any of his drawings, save, possibly, a jiggling point of light, like the bouncing ball of "Community Sing" presentations in the film theaters of the 1910s and '20s. In the drawing of a grade school class posing for a photograph, heads are turning here and there, a finger gophers beneath a collar, a nose twitches. Why should they watch the photographer's birdie? The bird they have their eyes on will not come to roost during their mortal lives. Why should it?

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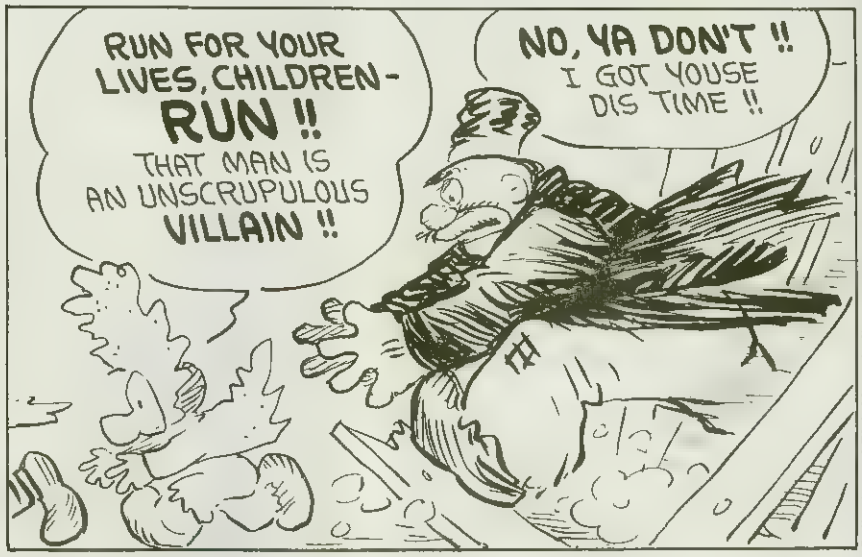
The Life and Hard Times of Bunker Hill, Jr.



Collection of Rick Marschall

by Ron Goulart

Bunker Hill, Jr., better known as Bunky, had a long and fruitful career as a waif and a stray. A loner and a wanderer, as well as a spiritual orphan, Bunky was the hero of an epic mock melodrama that took decades to unfold.

He was the creation of Billy DeBeck and, from the late 1920s on, could be found upstairs from the *Barney Google* Sunday page. His top strip, originally entitled *Parlor, Bedroom & Sink*, was satirical, burlesque, lowbrow, erudite, meanminded, and sentimental, and surely was one of the wackiest soap operas ever concocted.

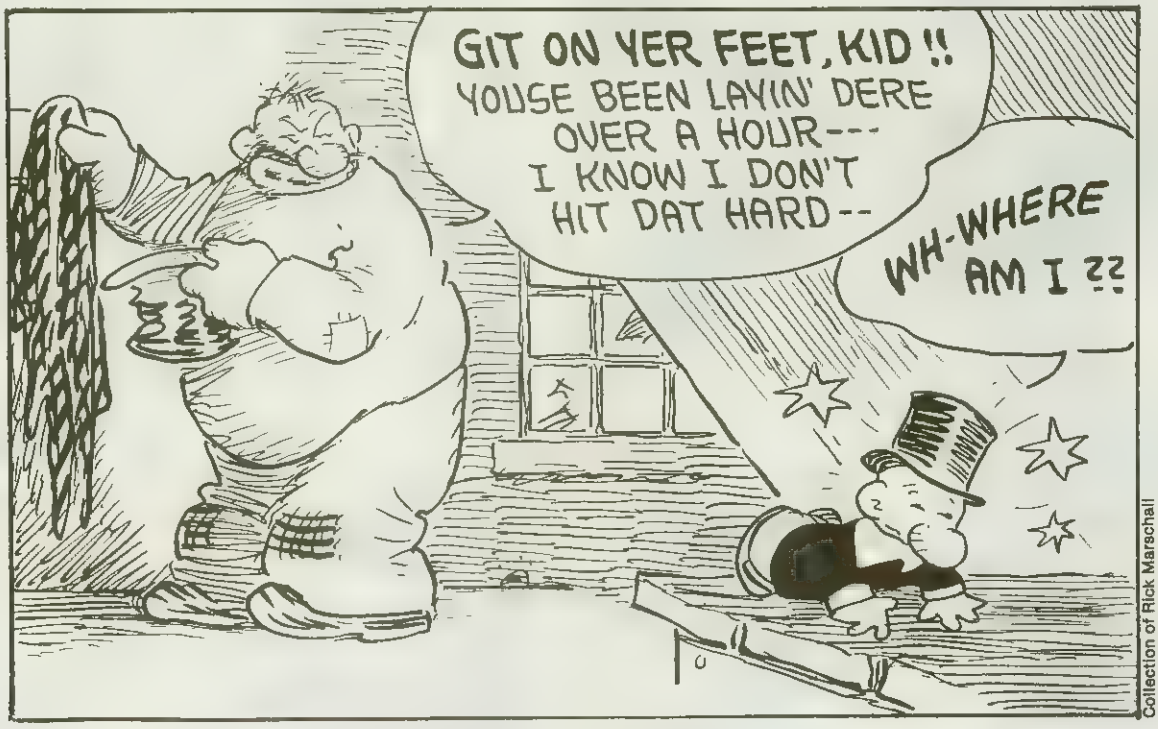
Bunky, who sprang out of a literary tradition that includes Candide, Oliver Twist, and Little Orphan Annie, was a precocious tyke who roamed the world in the baby clothes and bonnet he'd been christened in. He possessed a nose that rivaled that of Jimmy Durante and a vocabulary that many a pundit would envy. For some reason, Bunky is also an outcast as far as histories of the comics go. With the exception of a few glowing paragraphs in *The World Encyclopedia of Comics*, you'll find nary a mention of the bulbnosed urchin in any of the standard histories of strips. This piece, and the accompanying sample sequence, is meant to cause some attention to be paid to one of the neglected stars of the funnies.

When *Parlor, Bedroom & Sink* began, on May 16, 1926, Bunky was nowhere in evidence... which is probably just as well, since the first Sunday deals with the wedding of his parents. After the nuptials Bunker Hill, Sr. informs his new bride, Bibsy, that they won't exactly be going to Paris, London or even Niagara Falls on their honeymoon. After a drive around the park in a taxi cab, they check in at the nearest hotel. When the unctuous desk clerk inquires, "The bridal suite, sir?," Bunker replies, in bold face, "No! Just a parlor, bedroom and sink." For the next several months the strip is devoted to the typical married-life gags, the sort of stuff somebody like Chic Young was content to work with for a lifetime. The restless DeBeck, however, soon lost interest in the domestic scene.

In October he has Bibsy test for a job in silent pictures and, when she's hired at a starting salary of $700 a week, he shifts to continuity and an increasingly wild burlesque melodrama that kids all the cliches and conventions of the success-has-its-price sort of movies, plays, and novels. By this time, by the way, thanks to the growing popular appeal of Barney Google and his racehorse Spark Plug, DeBeck was quite a success himself.

Initially it is Bunky, Sr. who has the dire adventures. Falsely convicted of robbing his own wife, he is sentenced to 10 years of hard labor. After some time on the rockpile, he escapes, is hunted by bloodhounds, rides the boxcars, hangs out in Skid Row. Eventually he and Bibsy are reunited, but by that time her career in films is over and she is working as the companion of an eccentric multimillionaire. Bunky, Sr., signing on as butler, helps thwart a murder plot. DeBeck then returns to sports, always one of his favorite topics. First Bunky, Sr. works as a professional baseball player and then as a successful prizefighter. By this point the language of the strip has changed and DeBeck is also using captions that parody movie title cards and the flowery language of slick magazine romances. On the fateful day of November 13, 1927 Bibsy succeeds in tracking down her wayward husband and arrives to show him their new baby. This is Bunky, but he has neither the beezer nor the vocabulary he'll soon acquire. His nose is buttonsmall, and all he says is, "Yaw."

Within a few weeks, however, little Bunky's nose has blossomed and he's begun speaking in a worldlywise manner. "We must prove to the world that we are capable of overcoming the great obstacles that my poor misguided father has thrown in our paths," he advises his mother. "Don't worry, mother of mine! Together we will work out our salvation without assistance from anyone." This sort of discourse experienced in, say, a Mary Pickford pluck-and-luck movie wouldn't cause much in the way of chuckles. But delivered deadpan by the bonneted Bunky it takes on a somewhat different coloration.



Collection of Rick Marschall

Early in 1928, during a period when Bunky was wandering the cruel world on his own, DeBeck introduced a new character to the strip. This was Fagan, a truly mean and rotten fellow and, along with Roy Crane's Bull Dawson, one of the great unrepentant villains of the funnies. Fagan dresses like a bum, robs widows and orphans, kicks stray dogs, beats children, and is not above stealing pennies from a blind man's cup. He is a total lowlife, without any redeeming social value, and yet he's somehow an attractive character. On Fagan's second appearance DeBeck tells us that poor little Bunky has "unwittingly committed himself into the hands of a vicious, unscrupulous 'Fagan' (famous Dickens character)." A case for DeBeck's being a Dickens enthusiast would be easier to make if he'd spelled Fagin correctly (it wasn't until the middle 1930s that his loutish villain got around to substituting an *i* for the final *a* in his monicker). Since DeBeck was obviously a movie fan, he may simply have been recalling the 1922 silent version of *Oliver Twist*, with Jackie Coogan as the orphan lad and Lon Chaney as Fagin.

Another of Fagan's (we'll stick with DeBeck's original spelling) crimes was the murder of the English language. One of his favorite locutions was "youse" and this became his trademark—"Now youse lay low—leave ever'ting to yer ol pal Fagan —an' youse'll be settin' on top wit your dear parents before youse knows it." His usage was infectious and soon sundry other characters of all stations took to inserting *youse* into their conversations (this was usually noted by DeBeck with an asterisk, explaining "the Fagan influence"). Bunky had the habit of alluding to Fagan as "you viper" and after considerable exposure to the Fagan influence he coined the immortal phrase, "Youse is a viper!" For a time in the early 1930s DeBeck ran a separate panel on Sunday that showed other folks using the line (Pretty girl to date: "I hope you don't mind if little brother goes to the movies with us." Date: "Youse is a viper!").

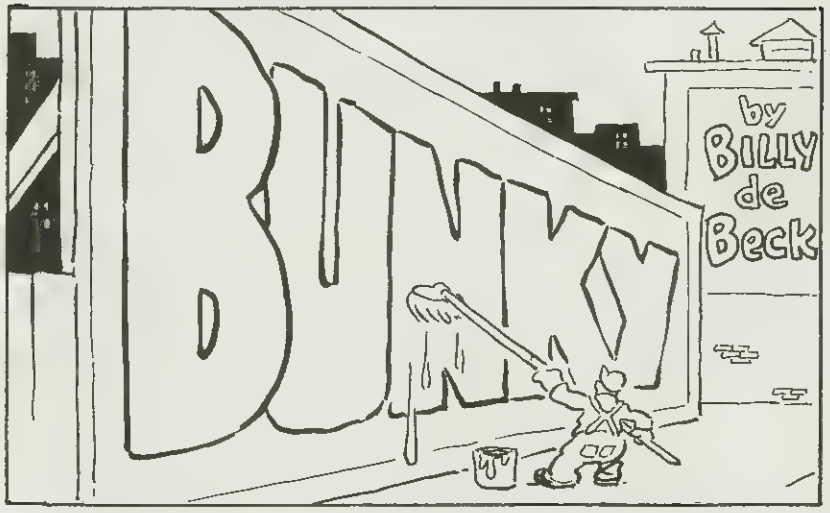
Throughout the '30s the Bunky saga unfolded like a Victorian picaresque. There were reunions and separations, wanderings, ups and downs of fortune, changes of identity. Bunky became a reluctant star of talking pictures ("They shall never make an actor of me—my destiny is surely greater than in the role of clown for a fickle mob!"), the mascot of a big league baseball team, a flyweight boxer, a performer in a rather sinister circus. For a time he even teamed up with Spark Plug. He finds his parents, loses them, finds them again. Sometimes he has to run away, his bootied feet sending up clouds of dust, for the good of his parents or to keep himself out of an orphanage or reform school. "Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage," he remarks during one such escape. "But just the same, I'm not going to be cooped up if I can help it! I must make a clean getaway and I shall start life all over again... free and untrammeled!"

During one adventure, involving gangster Tony Casino, Bunky teams up with a brave boy scout named Dick Armstrong. The courageous Dick says things like, "You big bully, take that," while slugging it out with heavies and may well be a near relation of Jack Armstrong, who took to the airwaves a few years later. This episode also introduced Silo Reeves, "said to be the greatest detective in the world." When not dealing in mystery and derring-do, the strip concerned itself with various current fads and foibles. For instance, in 1933 Fagan becomes famous on the Coasty Coast Broadcasting Corporation as a romantic singer. Wearing a sack over his head, he is billed as the Masked Crooner. His only song seems to be *Love is De Sweetest T'ing*.

DeBeck also indulged quite a bit in fantasy in the 1930s. One sequence dealt with a gorilla who went around, at Bunky's suggestion, dressed in suit and tophat, another with a shapechanging witch who turns Fagan into a bullpup and Bunky into a duck. The longest fantasy yarn took well over a year of Sundays to unfold. It got rolling early in 1937 when Bunky discovers that a yellow mutt dog named John Thomas can talk. Not only that, but "where I came from all th' dogs can talk." The dog invites Bunky to come along on a homeward journey and "as the pale moon rises over the tropical sea, the gallant little ship with John Thomas aboard sails gently to the shores of Poochadina." Once on his home ground John Thomas walks on his hind legs, dons natty clothes, and smokes stogies. He also reveals affinities for hanging around saloons, gambling, and flirting with the ladies. All in all, he's pretty much a canine Barney Google. At one point he even gets a job as a comic-strip artist. When asked by Bunky to explain one of his gags, John Thomas replies, "Heck fire!! How should I know? I'm only a comic artist—you gotta figure those things out for yourself."

The strip underwent several format changes, growing from two tiers to three and then stretching from a third to a half page. In September of 1932 the official title became *Parlor, Bedroom & Sink starring BUNKY*. By the spring of 1935 that was shortened to just plain *Bunky*. Billy DeBeck died of cancer in November of 1942, but all his features continued, taken over by Joe Musial and Fred Lasswell. He is best remembered as the creator of Barney Google, but there are those of us who feel his best and brightest creation was the philosophical waif with the enormous nose. n

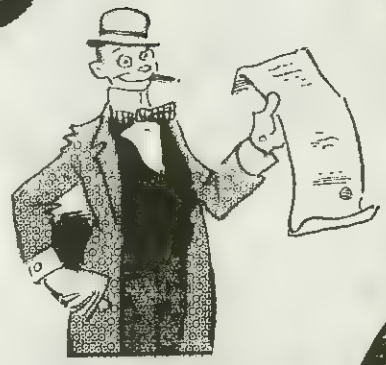
THE CAST OF

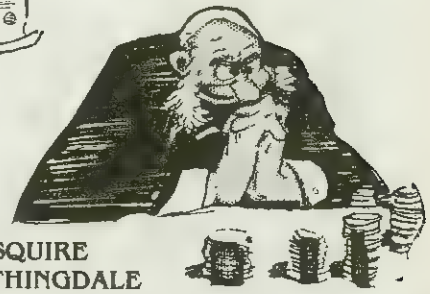


BUNKER HILL, Jr.

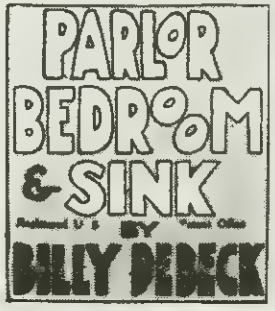
FAGAN, THE VIPER

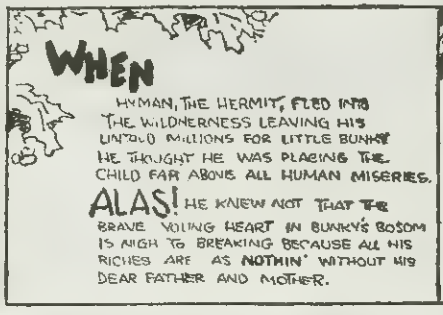
Mrs. BIBSY HILL


BUNKER HILL, Sr.


SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE

Sequence from Oct. 27, 1929 – Mar. 16, 1930.



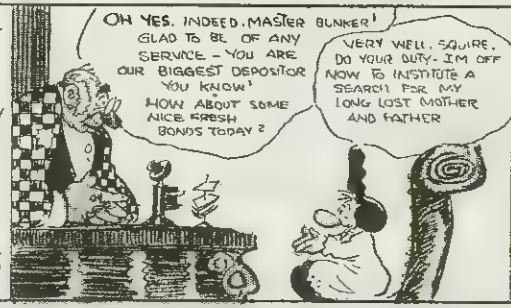

WHEN
HYMAN, THE HERMIT, FLED INTO THE WILDERNESS LEAVING HIS UNTOLD MILLIONS FOR LITTLE BUNKY HE THOUGHT HE WAS PLACING THE CHILD FAR ABOVE ALL HUMAN MISERIES.
ALAS! HE KNEW NOT THAT THE BRAVE YOUNG HEART IN BUNKY'S BOSOM IS NIGH TO BREAKING BECAUSE ALL HIS RICHES ARE AS NOTHIN' WITHOUT HIS DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER.

EVERY BITE I TAKE CHOKES ME AND EVERY SIP I DRINK BURNS MY THROAT, WHILE ALL THIS EMPTY SHOW SHAMES ME, FOR AT THIS VERY MOMENT PERHAPS MY DEAR PARENTS ARE HUNTING A CRUST OF BREAD!

WHAT F---S WE MORTALS BE!!
WE ARE POOR AND WE THINK THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS IS ONLY FOR THE RICH – AND WHEN WE ARE RICH WE ARE BESET WITH TRIBULATIONS AND ENVY THE POOR WHO HAVE FEW AND SIMPLE NEEDS!

THE YOUNG MASTER IS NOT QUITE HIMSELF TODAY
WHAT?
OH! THIS BOREDOM! THIS UTTER BOREDOM – I MUST DO SOMETHING I CAN STAND THIS NO LONGER.

I – SNIF SNIF – SHALL GO AND DISCUSS MY INVESTMENT PROBLEMS WITH SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE PERHAPS THAT WILL TAKE MY MIND OFF MY TROUBLES!!


OH YES, INDEED, MASTER BUNKER! GLAD TO BE OF ANY SERVICE – YOU ARE OUR BIGGEST DEPOSITOR YOU KNOW! HOW ABOUT SOME NICE FRESH BONDS TODAY?
VERY WELL, SQUIRE, DO YOUR DUTY – I'M OFF NOW TO INSTITUTE A SEARCH FOR MY LONG LOST MOTHER AND FATHER

AND AT THE VERY DOOR OF THE GREAT FINANCIAL INSTITUTION BIBSY AND BUNKER HILL, BIKE OUT A MISERABLE PITTANCE, SUFFICIENT ONLY TO KEEP BODY AND SOUL TOGETHER.
I WONDER WHERE OUR BABY IS TONIGHT?

Collection of Ron Goulart

All *Parlor, Bedroom & Sink* strips courtesy and © King Features Syndicate

PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK
BY BILLY DEBECK
DISTRAUGHT
HIS SEPARATION FROM THE PARENTS
HE LOVES SO DEARLY,
THE FACT THAT HE IS THE RICHEST CHILD IN THE WORLD IS AS NAUGHT TO LITTLE BUNKY. RATHER THAN DWELL FURTHER ON A HOPELESS MATTER HE HAS GONE TO THE BANK TO DISCUSS WITH SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE THE INVESTMENT AND DISPOSITION OF HIS MILLIONS
AT THE VERY PORTALS OF THIS SAME FINANCIAL INSTITUTION MR. AND MRS. BUNKER HILL SCRUB THE FLOORS ON WHICH BUNKY TRODS
NOW MASTER BUNKER HILL JUNIOR LET ME CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR EXCELLENT JUDGMENT. EVERY BOND WE SELECTED WAS GOLD-EDGED - YOUR FORTUNE IS SAFE HERE - REMEMBER I'M ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE !
THANKS, SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE - THANKS A LOT! I MUST BE OFF NOW - GOOD DAY SR!
NOW TO FIND MY DEAR MOTHER AND FATHER - EVERY PENNY OF INTEREST ON ALL THOSE BONDS SHALL AID IN MY SEARCH
I'M TIRED OF SEEING YOU LOAF AROUND HERE YOU'RE FIRED!! BOTH OF YOU GET OUT OF THIS HERE BANK.
OH SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE!! TELL US YOU'RE ONLY CLOWNING!
WHAT? YOU ARE FORCING US TO RESIGN WITHOUT A MOMENT'S NOTICE?
OH! WHAT SHALL WE DO? I'VE BEEN COUNTING ON THIS WEEK'S SALARY TO START A SEARCH FOR OUR YOUNG ONE
THE BIG SOAN'SO! TEN BUCKS IS NOTHING TO HIM AND HOW WE NEED IT! YOU POOR LITTLE WOMAN —
CLICK CLICK
NOW FOR MASTER BUNKERS BONDS I CAN BLAME THE THEFT ON THOSE TWO WRETCHES AND WHO'LL BELIEVE THEY'RE NOT GUILTY? AH HOHAHA WHO INDEED?

PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK
BY BILLY DEBECK
WHEN LITTLE BUNKY PLACED HIS MILLIONS IN THE HANDS OF SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE FOR INVESTMENT & SAFEKEEPING LITTLE DID HE DREAM THE BENEVOLENT LOOKING OLD GENTLEMAN WAS A THIEF!
YOU SAY ALL MY MONEY IS GONE ? EVERY BOND YOU GAVE ME STOLEN ?
YES, MASTER BUNKER! EVERY BOND HAS BEEN STOLEN BY SOME WICKED THIEF!!
I HOPE YOU REALIZE, MY DEAR YOUNG MAN, I FEEL AS BAD AS YOU DO YOU TRUST ME, OF COURSE - SURELY, YOU DON'T THINK I WOULD TAKE YOUR MONEY!
OH, NO!!! SQUIRE, BUT THIS IS INDEED A SAD BLOW - I INTENDED TO USE THAT MONEY IN A WORLD-WIDE SEARCH FOR MY LONG LOST MOTHER AND FATHER
I MAY HAVE A CLUE MASTER BUNKY, IT MAY BE THAT THE LADY I'M AND SCRUBWOMAN WHOM I DISCHARGED HAVE TAKEN THIS MEANS OF REVENGE - SHALL I NOTIFY THE POLICE?
AHHHHHH A FINE SCRUBWOMAN AND I'M SURE - POOR OLD SOUL AND QUITE AS MISERABLE - I HATE TO DO IT!
HOWEVER, SQUIRE DISHONESTY SHOULD BE PUNISHED! NOTIFY THE POLICE AT ONCE!!
VERY WELL - I SHALL DO SO AT ONCE!
AN HOUR LATER
BIBSY AND BUNKER HILL, UNFORTUNATE VICTIMS OF SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE'S MONSTROUS SCHEME TO THROW THE GUILT OF THE THEFT ON THEM WHILE THE REAL CULPRIT REMAINS ABOVE SUSPICION'
BUNKY SAY WE DID IT AND PERHAPS THEY'LL STOP TORTURING US
THE THIRD DEGREE

PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

BY BILLY DEBECK

HOW CLEVERLY THE SPIDER, SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE, CAUGHT THE TWO UNFORTUNATES, BIBSY AND BUNKER HILL, IS ALL TOO APPARENT AS THE

GREAT DRAMA UNFOLDS!

HAVING STOLEN ALL OF LITTLE BUNKY'S BONDS, AMOUNTING TO MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, THE SCHEMING SQUIRE SET OUT TO FIND SOMEONE UPON WHOM HE COULD LAY THE SCARLET FINGER OF SUSPICION AND SEEING BIBSY AND BUNKER TOILING OVER SCRUB PAILS EKING OUT THEIR DAILY BREAD, THE SPIDER POUNCED ON THEM AND MARKED THEM FOR HIS VICTIMS. INNOCENT THOUGH THEY ARE, THE IRON HAND OF THE LAW - **THE THIRD DEGREE** WAS TOO MUCH FOR THEIR HUNGER-WEAKENED BODIES AND THEY CONFESSED TO THE CRIME THEY NEVER COMMITTED IN ORDER TO ESCAPE FURTHER TORTURE.

BUNKER HILL

UNFORTUNATE VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCE - ACCUSED BY THE STATE OF HAVING STOLEN BONDS AND MONEY BELONGING, *THOUGH HE KNOWS IT NOT.* TO HIS OWN SON

I'M INNOCENT BELIEVE ME

G'WAN YOUSE AN' YER WIFE SQUAWKED YOUSE DONE IT - GO BACK AN' LAY DOWN!

THE POOR WIFE

OF BUNKER HILL ACCUSED WITH HIM EQUALLY GUILTY OF A DISGRACEFUL FELONY

IS THERE NO JUSTICE? SNIF SNIF

HUSH! MY POOR WOMAN!

SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE -

WHOSE GREED FOR GOLD HAS CAUSED THIS TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE IN THE LIVES OF TWO **INNOCENT** HUMAN BEINGS GUILTY THOUGH HE IS, HIS POSITION IN THE WORLD PLACES HIM TOO FAR ABOVE THE REALMS OF CRIME - CONSEQUENTLY NO ONE SUSPECTS HIM

AND LITTLE BUNKY

WHO PACES THE LONELY STREETS IN DESPERATION, IGNORANT OF THE FACT THAT THE TWO PEOPLE HE LOVES ABOVE ALL OTHERS AND IN SEARCH OF WHOM HE WAS TO SPEND EVERY DOLLAR OF HIS VAST FORTUNE ARE THE TWO ACCUSED OF THE THEFT

OH! IF MY DEAR FATHER WERE ONLY HERE TO CONSOLE ME —

THE JURY

TWELVE GOOD MEN AND TRUE WHO WILL DECIDE THE FATE, THE INNOCENCE OR GUILT OF THE TWO UNFORTUNATES NOW CAGED BEHIND PRISON BARS

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PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

BY BILLY DEBECK

BECAUSE OF HIS TENDER AGE LITTLE BUNKY WAS EXCUSED FROM TESTIFYING AT THE TRIAL OF THE TWO MISERABLE WRETCHES UPON WHOM SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE CAST THE STIGMA OF GUILT. THEY WERE SENT TO PRISON TO SERVE NINETY-NINE YEARS AND A DAY WITHOUT THEIR CHILD HAVING HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO WITHDRAW THE CHARGE AGAINST THEM WHICH HE SURELY WOULD HAVE DONE HAD HE BEEN THERE KNOWING THEY COULD NOT POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF THE TERRIBLE CRIME.

MEANWHILE SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE REAPS THE BENEFITS OF HIS VICIOUS THEFT AND LITTLE BUNKY IS LEFT **PENNILESS TO FACE THE WORLD ALONE.**

QUIT MUMBLIN' TO YERSELF AN MANICURE. DEM ROCKS!

MY WIFE MY POOR DEAR WIFE!! WHAT HAVE THEY DONE WITH HER? WE'RE BOTH INNOCENT!

OH! HOW AWFUL IT IS! NEVER SHALL I SEE MY DEAR HUSBAND OR MY CHILD AGAIN - AND, YET I AM **INNOCENT** OF THE BANK ROBBERY.

DON'T CRY ANY MORE MRS. HILL - I'VE BEEN HERE IN THIS SHOP FOR 27 YEARS - I'M INNOCENT, TOO

IN THE MEAN-WHILE -

(THE SHEEP IN WOLF'S CLOTHING)

AH I SEE YOU HAVE THE PAPERS TELLING OF THE CONVICTION OF THOSE TWO THIEVES WHO STOLE YOUR MONEY.

THEY DID NOT STEAL MY MONEY — THOSE PEOPLE ARE MY LONG LOST MOTHER AND FATHER - I RECOGNIZE THEIR PHOTOGRAPHS AND YOU MUST DO SOMETHING SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE, TO SECURE THEIR RELEASE!

GET OUT OF MY HOUSE! HOW DARE YOU ASK ME TO PLEAD FOR PARDON FOR TWO SELF CONFESSED BANK ROBBERS?

HAVE YOU NO HEART?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT THERE IS NO ONE TO WHOM I CAN TURN BUT "FAGAN" HE WILL HELP!!

WELL IF IT AIN'T ME LITTLE PAL! WOT'S UP?

"FAGAN", I'M READY TO DO ANYTHING YOU ASK IF YOU WILL HELP ME TO GET MY POOR MOTHER AND FATHER OUT OF PRISON - THEY ARE **INNOCENT** - WILL YOU HELP ME FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE, FAGAN!

333X5!

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PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

BY BILLY DEBECK

JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO BUNKY WAS THE RICHEST CHILD IN THE WORLD - NOW HE IS HOMELESS, FRIENDLESS AND PENNILESS. HIS DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER ARE IN JAIL ACCUSED BY SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE (THE REAL CULPRIT) OF HAVING STOLEN BUNKY'S MILLIONS.

HAVING NO ONE TO WHOM HE COULD TURN, BUNKY WAS FORCED TO SEEK OUT HIS OLD ENEMY FAGAN WHO PROMISED HE WOULD HELP IN THE SEARCH FOR THE REAL THIEF. BUNKY WOULD AGREE TO GIVE HIM NINE TENTHS OF HIS FORTUNE. THIS BUNKY GLADLY AGREED TO DO SINCE HIS FIRST THOUGHT IS FOR HIS PARENTS WHO ARE SUFFERING TORTURE AND IGNOMINY BEHIND THE GREY WALLS OF THE STATE PRISON.

MY FORTUNE AMOUNTED TO MANY MILLIONS FAGAN - IF YOUSE * SUCCEED IN FINDING THE THIEF AND THEREBY SECURING THE RELEASE OF MY POOR DEAR PARENTS YOUSE WILL BE A VERY RICH MAN INDEED

LEMME FINK BUNKY - DONT DISTOIB ME TOUGHTS FER A MINIT

* THE FOLLOWING INFLUENCE

NOW YOUSE LAY LOW - LEAVE EVERYTHING TO YER OL PAL, FAGAN - AN YOUSE LL BE GETTIN ON TOP O IT FER DEAR PARENT BEFORE YOUSE KNOWS IT - IM GONNA DO A LITTLE DETEKIF WOIK FOIST OF ALL

OH!! FAGAN I SEE NOW WHAT A WONDERFUL HEART YOUSE HAVE

SO DIS IS WHERE SQUIRE FARTHIN'DALE LIVES! BOY!! WOT A LAYOUT " IF IM CAUGHT HERE IN DE GROUNDS I'LL GET PINCHED

DERE'S A LIGHT IN DE SECOND STORY WINDER I'LL SCALE DE WALLS AN SEE WOT'S GOIN ON INSIDE DE MANSION

WHY THE LOOK OF CONSTERNATION ON FAGAN'S FACE ???

CHEE - I KNOW DAT BOID!!

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PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

BY BILLY DEBECK

LEST WE FORGET -

FAGAN MAKES HIS WAY SILENTLY AND CAREFULLY THROUGH THE GROUNDS OF THE GREAT MANSION WHEREIN RESIDES "SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE AND AS HE CREEPS CLOSE TO THE WINDOW NEAR WHERE SITS THE SQUIRE,

A LOOK OF AMAZEMENT

COMES OVER HIS FEATURES FOR THERE, BEFORE FAGAN'S VERY EYES SITS A MONSTER WHO WAS ONCE KNOWN AS "THE SLIPPERY EEL",

A DANGEROUS CRIMINAL WHO HAD ONCE BEEN FAGAN'S CELL MATE IN AN AUSTRALIAN PRISON AND WHO NOW OCCUPIES AN IMPORTANT POSITION IN THE SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL WORLD

I WANT TER SEE DAT GUY WOT LIVES HERE AN' CALLS HISSELF, "SQUIRE FARTHIN'DALE" TELL HIM HIS OLD PAL FAGAN IS HERE

THE SQUIRE IS VERY BUSY SIR, AND CANNOT BE DISTURBED. BEGONE YOU TRAMP!

SQUIRE ME EYE DATS ALL YOUSE KNOWS ABOUT HIM!

I WOULDNTVE BELIEVED IT POSSIBLE JUS LOOKIT DIS JOINT IL BET HE SWIPED BUNKYS MONEY HISSELF.

AHH - MILLIONS IN GOLD — AND IT'S ALL MINE NOW

AHEM!

YOU - FAGAN !!! WHAT DO YOU WANT? WHO ARE YOU? I NEVER SAW YOU BEFORE PLEASE GO AWAY - I'VE GOT A WEAK HEART

YOUSE KNOWS ME ALL RIGHT - "SLIPPERY" - AN YOUSE IS GONNA BE ME PAL JUS' LIKE YOUSE WAS IN DE OL DAYS - HUH?

PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK
BY
BILLY DEBECK
WITH A SIGH OF RELIEF AND A GLITTER IN HIS WICKED EYES, SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE SAT BACK IN ONE OF HIS GREAT COMFORTABLE CHAIRS TO CONTEMPLATE THE FUTURE. ALL OF BUNKY'S MILLIONS ARE NOW HIS - HE STOLE THEM IT IS TRUE BUT HE CLEVERLY CAST THE BLAME ON THE TWO POOR WRETCHES WHO ARE NOW SPENDING THEIR DAYS IN PRISON CELLS WHILE HE SITS AND SMOKES AND DREAMS, FAR FAR ABOVE SUSPICION. THEN FAGAN APPEARS ON THE SCENE. FAGAN WHOM LITTLE BUNKY ENLISTED IN THE FIGHT TO FREE HIS POOR MOTHER AND FATHER - THE SQUIRE RECOGNIZES FAGAN AT ONCE AS FAGAN RELATES ALL TOO VIVIDLY THE STORY OF HER, YES SHE'S THERE IN AN AUSTRALIAN PRISON! WHEN WE'VE FORTHWITH DOOM WAS THE SLIPPERY EEL AND FAGAN WAS HIS CELLMATE AND THE MATTER SHAPED BY FATE SEES FAGAN TO BE ONE
FAGAN. YOUSE AN ME WUZ ALWAYS BUDDIES, WUZANT WE? DIDN'T I LISTA DIVVY EVERTING I HAD WITCHA? PLEASE GO WAY FAGAN, AN LEAVE ME ALONE
GO 'WAY, - NUTTON! YOUSE IS GOT PLENTY O SWAG HERE AND I WANNA CUT IN ON IT TH' KID YOU GYPED IS ONE O ME PALS - NOW COFF UP!
HERE FAGAN, TAKE THIS - I'M GIVIN' IT TO YOUSE CAUSE I LOVE YOUSE LIKE A BRUDDER COUNT IT!
HOW MUCH? I SEE YOUSE IS BEGINNIN' TO TALK ME LANGWIDGE NOW, SLIPPERY.
THERE'S $10,000 IN GOLD. OL' PAL AN' BECAUSE I LOVE YOUSE SO I'M GONNA GIVE YOUSE SUMPIN ELSE -
CHEE, EELY. YOUSE IS TOO GENRAWS
QUICK. WILLIAMS! CALL THE POLICE THIS CREATURE TRIED TO BLACK-MAIL ME!
SCANDALOUS AB SO LUTE LY SCANDALOUS!!
I AM TOO IMPATIENT TO KNOW THE RESULTS OF FAGAN'S INTERVIEW WITH THE SQUIRE AND I'M SURE THEY WON'T MIND MY INTRUDING LIKE THIS
DEBECK
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PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK
BY
BILLY DEBECK
TRUE TO HIS WORD, FAGAN MADE HIS WAY INTO THE INNER SANCTUM OF "SQUIRE" FARTHINGDALE'S GREAT MANSION IN ORDER TO SPEAK TO THE MAN WHO ALONE IS ABLE TO FREE LITTLE BUNKY'S DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER FROM PRISON. UPON MEETING FACE TO FACE WITH THE "SQUIRE", FAGAN'S SURPRISE KNEW NO BOUNDS AS HE STOOD BEFORE
SLIPPERY EEL.
A FAMOUS CROOK WHO WAS FAGAN'S CELL MATE FIFTY ONE YEARS AGO THE EEL IS TERRIFIED - HE BEGS FAGAN TO WITHDRAW FROM THE SCENE - HE PROMISES HIM A FORTUNE IN GOLD AND THEN WHILE FAGAN IS COUNTING HIS GOLD THE EEL STRIKES FROM BEHIND AND FAGAN KNOWS NO MORE MEANWHILE BUNKY ANXIOUS TO KNOW THE OUTCOME OF FAGAN'S VENTURES TO THE MANSION
NO! NO! THE SQUIRE IS TOO BUSY TO SEE ANYONE - YOU CANNOT COME IN!
YES BUT YOUSE DON'T UNDERSTAND - THE CONFERENCE HE IS HAVING WITHIN CONCERNS ME! I MUST GO IN!! STAND ASIDE OR I SHALL BE OBLIGED TO USE FORCE!
PERHAPS YOU WILL NOT ARGUE WITH THE NEXT GENTLEMAN WHO CALLS! WHAT IS THAT STRANGE NOISE I HEAR? ALL IS NOT WELL METHINKS FAGAN. FAGAN. WHERE ARE YOUSE?
WOIK FAST, KID - YOUSE IS SOITNLY A SIGHT FER SORE EYES - HE'S CALLIN DE COPS - MAKE IT SNAPPY!
WHAT HAPPENED? DID YOUSE INSULT THE OLD GENTLEMAN, FAGAN?
NOW WE WILL RETIRE TO SOME QUIET SPOT AND YOUSE SHALL RELATE WHAT HAS HAPPENED.
HUH?
ER - - - BANDIT HAS ESCAPED!! OH, DEAR - OH DEAR - I MUST HAVE TIME TO THINK BEFORE YOU ASK ANY QUESTIONS.
DEBECK
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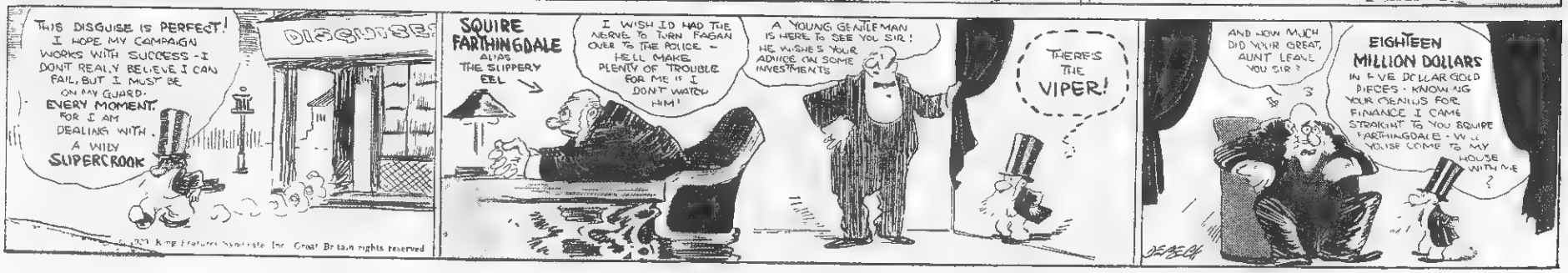
PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

BY BILLY DEBECK

With intuitive genius little Bunky rescues Fagan from the bonds with which he had been so securely tied by the slippery eel, otherwise known as "Squire Farthingdale." Hurriedly the two slip out of the great house and make their way to a cabin in the woods where Fagan relates the happenings of his recent two hours with the 'Squire". Bunky is startled and horrified to hear that the 'Squire" is not the gentleman he thought him to be, **but a vicious criminal** and realizes that Fagan must now be kept in the background if their plan to rescue his dear parents from an ignominious life in prison is to succeed

FER HIS OWN SAKE DE EEL WUZ A FOOL TO CALL DE COPS 'CUZ I COULDA TOINED STOOL PIGEON ON HIM AN HE WOULDA BEEN JUGGED AGIN — DE KETCH IN IT IS DEY MIGHTA PULLED ME IN, TOO, AN' DEN WHERE'D WE'D BE?
I DON'T BELIEVE THE EEL WILL SQUEAL ON YOUSE, FAGAN - IT'S FAR TOO DANGEROUS FOR HIM - YOUSE STAY HERE WHILE I RECONNOITER ABOUT A BIT WILL YOUSE?
IT'S REALLY TOO BAD THAT FAGAN HAS SUCH A MISERABLE RECORD — HE WOULD HAVE BEEN INVALUABLE TO ME - AND MY PLANS NOW I MUST WORK ALONE!


THIS DISGUISE IS PERFECT! I HOPE MY CAMPAIGN WORKS WITH SUCCESS - I DON'T REALLY BELIEVE I CAN FAIL, BUT I MUST BE ON MY GUARD- EVERY MOMENT, FOR I AM DEALING WITH A WILY SUPERCROOK
DISGUISE
SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE ALIAS THE SLIPPERY EEL
I WISH I'D HAD THE NERVE TO TURN FAGAN OVER TO THE POLICE — HELL MAKE PLENTY OF TROUBLE FOR ME IF I DON'T WATCH HIM!
A YOUNG GENTLEMAN IS HERE TO SEE YOU SIR! HE WISHES YOUR ADVICE ON SOME INVESTMENTS
THERE'S THE VIPER!
AND HOW MUCH DID YOUR GREAT, AUNT LEAVE YOU SIR?
EIGHTEEN MILLION DOLLARS IN FIVE DOLLAR GOLD PIECES - KNOWING YOUR GENIUS FOR FINANCE I CAME STRAIGHT TO YOU SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE - WILL YOUSE COME TO MY HOUSE WITH ME?

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PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

BY BILLY DEBECK

Temporarily prevented from participating in the little drama planned by Bunky to trap the slippery eel, Fagan remains in hiding at the cabin in the woods secretly gnashing his teeth in chagrin at his failure to get his hands on some of the money the **EEL** has stolen from Bunky. **However**, he knows he dare not interfere and patiently awaits little Bunky's return, confident the child will leave no stone unturned to effect the deliverance from prison of his own dear father and mother. - Fagan's confidence is not ill-placed, gentle reader, for little Bunky's brilliant plan is moving swiftly toward its climax

YOU WERE PERFECTLY RIGHT NOT TO TRUST ALL THAT MONEY TO THE BANKS, MY YOUNG MAN, AND I CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR SAGACITY - WHERE DID YOU SAY YOUR GREAT-AUNT HID HER GOLD?
JUST FOLLOW ME, SIR THE GOLD IS IN A CABIN IN THE WOODS - MY POOR GREAT-AUNT WAS A BIT FURRY-MINDED AND LIKED TO KEEP THE GOLD WHERE SHE COULD COUNT IT EVERY DAY
EIGHTEEN MILLION BUCKS IN GOLD HERE IN DIS LONELY CABIN - WOT A STREAK O' LUCK NOW I CAN GET AWAY AN' FAGAN NEEDN'T NEVER BE A JINX AGAIN - I'LL BUY ME AN ISLAND IN DE SOUTH SEAS AN' LIVE LIKE KING SOLOMON
SHH - THE EEL IS HERE SHH RUSH HIM NOW
STAN' BACK - I'M GONNA SPRING ON HIM -

BAM! ZAM!! WAM!!!
NOW TO REVEAL MYSELF, AND TAKE MY SWEET REVENGE!!
HELP HELP HELP HELP HELP
PUSH DE COITANS ASIDE AN' COME IN, KID - AN' BRING SOME STRINGS WIDJA
YOU VIPER! WHAT ABOUT MY POOR MOTHER AND FATHER THAT YOUSE SENT TO PRISON?- SPEAK, YOU EEL!
FAGAN, YOUSE AN' ME WUZ ALLUS PALS - YOUSE KIN HAVE ANYT'ING I GOT IF YOUSE'LL LET ME GO - I'LL TELL YOUSE WHERE ALL ME SWAG IS PLANTED!
YOU BET YER BOTTOMS YOUSE IS GONNA TELL ME AN YOUSE AIN'T GONNA MOVE OUTTA THEM WRAPPERS TILL I GET ME MITTS ON EVER DIME YOUSE GOT WOT WOT WOT?
FAGAN, FA'G A N! YOUSE CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT MAKING THE WIPETCH CONFESS TO THE CRIME HE LAID ONTO MY DEAR FATHER AND MY DEAR MOTHER, CAN YOUSE?
SHUT UP - I'M HANDLIN' DIS BUSINESS FER YOUSE -

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PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

BY BILLY DEBECK

BECAUSE THE SLIPPERY EEL (SQUIRE FARTHINGDALE) COULD NOT RESIST THE LURE OF GOLD HE IS NOW HELD PRISONER, BOUND AND GAGGED, AT THE CABIN IN THE WOODS AS A RESULT OF LITTLE BUNKY'S BRILLIANT STRATEGY **FAGAN** IS DETERMINED THAT THE **EEL** SHALL DELIVER EVERY PENNY HE STOLE FROM LITTLE BUNKY—WHILE TO LITTLE BUNKY HIMSELF, THE MONEY IS OF **SMALL** IMPORTANCE IN COMPARISON WITH HIS BURNING DESIRE TO MAKE THE **EEL** CONFESS THAT **HE** COMMITTED THE GREAT ROBBERY **HIMSELF** AND THEREBY SECURE THE RELEASE OF BUNKY'S DEAR PARENTS FROM A LIFE OF TOIL AND **SHAME** IN PRISON

ALL RIGHT, FAGAN - I'M GONNA TELL YOUSE WHERE DE SWAG IS - DUNT HIT ME NO MORE, FAGAN I'M AN OL' MAN AN I CAN'T TAKE DE PUNCHES LIKE I USTA

NOW YOUSE IS CHIRPIN' LIKE A PAL — WOT'S DE COMBINATION OF DAT SAFE O' YOURN?

OH! WHAT A MISERABLE HEEL I AM - I WISH I COULD LIVE MY EIGHTY YEARS OVER AGAIN - I'D GO STRAIGHT AND DEVOTE MY LIFE TO CHARITY - HONEST I WOULD, BUNKY! **HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY.**

IF I RELEASE YOUSE FROM THOSE BONDS AND GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO ESCAPE, WILL YOUSE SIGN A CONFESSION?

I FEEL TERRIBLE. JUST **TERRIBLE!** I'M FILLED WITH REMORSE — I SHALL TURN OVER A NEW LEAF THIS VERY DAY -

THERE, THERE, EELY. DON'T CARRY ON SO.. HERE'S THE PAPER AND PENCIL -

I, Sqire Archibald Farthingdale, Hereinafter known as the Slippery Eel, stole Bunky Hill's money and blamed it on his dear mother and father who were working in my bank.

I hereby pray the Governor of this state to release Mr and Mrs B. H. Hill who are now serving prison sentences for a crime which I myself committed.

With best wishes

The Slippery Eel

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WHAT MATTERS IT NOW IF FAGAN APPROPRIATES ALL MY MONEY? I WANTED IT ONLY AS A MEANS TO GET MY POOR MOTHER AND FATHER OUT OF THAT TERRIBLE PRISON! I SINCERELY HOPE THE GOVERNOR IS NOT AWAY MAKING SPEECHES

AHHH

WILL YOUSE RELEASE THEM **AT ONCE**, YOUR HONOR?

PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

BY BILLY DEBECK

AFTER A SERIES OF DIRE MISFORTUNES, MISFORTUNES SO GREAT THAT THEY WOULD HAVE DRAGGED THE ORDINARY FAMILY TO THE LOWEST DEPTHS OF DESPAIR THE HILL FAMILY HAVE COME UP SMILING, SMILING AND HAPPY BECAUSE THEY ARE TOGETHER AGAIN, ARMED BY EXPERIENCE TO FACE THE FUTURE AND DETERMINED, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO STICK TOGETHER THROUGH THICK AND THIN, THROUGH FAIR WEATHER AND FOUL, THROUGH MISFORTUNE AND HAPPINESS - ALL FOR ONE AND

ONE FOR ALL!

OH, BUNKER ISN'T IT **HEAVENLY** TO HAVE OUR DEAR SWEET BABY BACK WITH US AGAIN?

YES MY DEAR IT IS AND IT'S WONDERFUL TO HAVE **YOU** BACK WITH ME AGAIN AND WE'LL NEVER LET ANYTHING SEPARATE US NOW, WILL WE?

I MUST SAY FATHER THAT I HOPE YOUSE HAVE LEARNED YOUR LESSON AS I HAVE THIS WORLD IS FULL OF PITFALLS FOR THE UNWARY AND IN THE PAST YOUSE AND MY DEAR DEAR MOTHER HAVE BEEN ALTOGETHER TOO UNWARY YES INDEED VERY **UNWARY!**

TAKE LITTLE BUNKY FOR A NICE WALK, BUNKER, AND WHEN YOU COME BACK I'LL HAVE SOME NICE BOLOGNEY FOR YOUR **DINNER**

GOOD EVE, MY DEAR ONE!

COME, MY SON. WE'LL TAKE A LITTLE AIR AND SEE HOW MANY NEW BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN PUT UP - GOOD-BYE MY PRECIOUS ONE.

REMARKABLE! ASTOUNDING!! BEWILDERING!!!

YOUR DEAR MOTHER IS THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY OF WOMEN MY SON -

YOUSE IS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT, FATHER DEAR

HARDON THIS INTRUSION SIR I AM PRESIDENT OF THE MERRY FILM COMPANY YOUR CHILD'S VOICE INTERESTS ME! WOULD YOU BRING HIM TO THE STUDIO FOR A **VOICE TEST**? HE MIGHT PROVE A SENSATION IN TALKING PICTURES -

WHY YES INDEED I THINK BUNKY WOULD LIKE THAT

WHAT! I, THE VERY DAPPER FATHER? DOES HE WANT ME TO BE AN **ACTOR?**

HE IS AS YOU SEE SIR. A MOST UNUSUAL CHILD - HE INHERITS HIS VOICE FROM HIS DEAR MOTHER WHO AT ONE TIME WAS A FAMOUS **OPERA** SINGER

PUT ME DOWN DEAR FATHER I WISH TO **THINK!**

IF HIS VOICE IS O.K. YOU WILL HAVE THE MOST FAMOUS CHILD IN THE WORLD HE WILL HAVE WEALTH FAR BEYOND YOUR DREAMS!

THEY SHALL NEVER MAKE AN ACTOR OUT OF ME - MY DESTINY IS SURELY GREATER THAN IN THE ROLE OF CLOWN FOR A FICKLE MOB!

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PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

BY BILLY DEBECK

OVER THE HAPPY REUNION OF THE HILL FAMILY HANGS A CLOUD - A CLOUD OF POVERTY, FOR NEITHER FATHER, MOTHER NOR CHILD POSSESSES ONE SOU OF THE COIN OF THE REALM

WHAT GOOD FORTUNE THEN FOR THE WORRIED FATHER TO HEAR THE PRESIDENT OF THE **NERSY FILM CORPORATION** ASSURE HIM THAT HIS CHILD MAY BE A SENSATION IN TALKING PICTURES

MR. HILL IS DELIGHTED AT THE PROSPECT BUT NOT SO LITTLE BUNKY WHO HEARTILY DETESTS THE IDEA OF BECOMING AN ACTOR -

HE FLEES TO HIS DEAR MOTHER TO TELL HER OF HIS FATHER'S PLANS FOR HIM AND HOPES TO ENLIST HER IN HIS AID

WHAT. MY CHILD, HAS BROUGHT YOU BACK SO SOON AND **WITHOUT** YOUR DEAR FATHER? SPEAK **MY SON.** WHAT EVIL HAS COME UPON US **NOW?**

MOTHER DEAR MOTHER. PLEASE LISTEN TO ME - MY FATHER HAS LISTENED TO THE WHISPERINGS OF SATAN AND WISHES TO MAKE AN **ACTOR** OUT OF ME! SAY YOUSE WON'T PERMIT IT MOTHER. SAY YOUSE WILL BE STRONG AND FORBID IT"!!

BUNKY. YOU ARE MY CHILD AND YOUR WISHES ARE MY OWN - YOUR DEAR FATHER SHALL NOT FORCE YOU TO BECOME THE ANIMAL CRACKER FOR THE FAMILY, ESPECIALLY IN A PROFESSION YOU **ABHOR!!**

YOUSE IS SO GOOD TO ME, DEAR, SWEET MOTHER

I AM YOUNG AND I WISH TO ENJOY MY YOUTH AS OTHER CHILDREN DO - I SHALL BE OLD SOON ENOUGH! AH. WHAT SUPREME JOY THESE SIMPLE AMUSEMENTS GIVE ME

NO! YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE CHILD AWAY FROM HIS PLAYTHINGS! I SHALL **NOT** ALLOW IT - NEVER. SHALL YOU MAKE A PICTURE ACTOR OUT OF MY SON

THIS IS OUR GREAT OPPORTUNITY HE WILL BE RICH - THE RICHEST AND MOST FAMOUS BABY IN THE UNIVERSE - AND YOU MUST **INSIST THAT HE OBEY ME.**

THEN I MUST BREAK MY PROMISE TO MY SON? WHAT WHAT WHAT

YES-SSS YOU MUST B-B-BREAK YOUR PROMISE TO OUR SON

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FAME AND FORTUNE LIE JUST AHEAD - OUR CHILD IS NO ORDINARY MORTAL - HE IS A **GENIUS!**

SNIF MY HEART IS BROKEN, BUT YOU KNOW BEST. DO WITH HIM AS YOU WILL - BLUE BLUE

FATHER. YOUSE IS A **VIPER.**

HUSH MY SON; HUSH

NERSY FILM CORP

PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

BY BILLY DEBECK

CONTRARY TO HIS OWN AND HIS MOTHER'S WISHES, LITTLE BUNKY HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER CONTRACT TO THE NERSY FILM COMPANY BY HIS FATHER WHO PROFESSES TO SEE FOR HIS CHILD

THE MOST BRILLIANT OF FUTURES

AS AN ACTOR IN TALKING PICTURES - THE OFFICIALS OF THE COMPANY FEEL SURE THAT THEY HAVE AT LAST COME UPON A "FIND" AND DESPITE POOR LITTLE BUNKY'S ABHORRENCE OF THE STAGE HE IS OBLIGED TO WORK NIGHT AND DAY IN ORDER THAT A PICTURE MAY BE SHOWN TO A WAITING WORLD

MY POOR LITTLE BABY! HOW MY HEART BLEEDS FOR HIM - NOT ONE WORD HAVE I HAD FROM HIM SINCE HIS DEAR FATHER TOOK HIM BY FORCE TO THE STUDIO AND I FEAR FOR MY LITTLE ONE'S HAPPINESS -

GET A LOAD OF THIS, BIBSY, AND CONGRATULATE YOUR HUSBAND ON HIS REMARKABLE FORESIGHT — IT'S THE CONTRACT I MADE THEM GIVE OUR CHILD - **$5000** A WEEK" THINK OF IT!

$5000 A WEEK! IT IS NOT POSSIBLE - I MUST BE DREAMING !!

IF YOU WILL NOW EXCUSE ME SIR. I WILL WITHDRAW TO MY HOME - I AM MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY EXHAUSTED THE EMOTIONAL STRAIN HAS BEEN TOO GREAT!

WHY YES, INDEED MY CHILD - GO HOME AND REST - THE PICTURE IS FINISHED AND IS A CERTAIN BOX OFFICE WINNER - A BRILLIANT NEW STAR HAS ARISEN - YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN

HE'LL KNOCK THE AUDIENCE TO THEIR KNEES WHAT WHAT WHO?

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QUITE A FEW PEOPLE LINING THE BOULEVARD AREN'T THERE, JOSEF?

YES, MASTER, AND, BE GORRA, IT'S PROUD I AM TO SAY THAT THEY ARE HERE IN YOUR SPECIAL HONOR.

PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK
BY
BILLY DEBECK
BUNKER HILL JR
HIS FIRST TALKING PICTURE
DONT YOU THINK MY SON, THAT IT IS TIME TO HAVE DONE WITH THAT TOY AND LEAVE FOR THE THEATRE?
YES BUNKY, DEAR DO COME!
I WISH, MY DEAR PARENTS YOU WOULD ALLOW ME MY TOYS - AFTER ALL YOU KNOW I AM REALLY BUT A BABE
MR HILL, MR HILL THIS IS THE THEATRE MANAGER SPEAKING - WHERE IS BUNKY? WHAT! HASN'T LEFT YET? WELL, HURRY HIM UP - THE THEATRE IS PACKED AND WE'RE HOLDING THE RADIO HOOK UP TILL HE GETS HERE - HURRY HURRY -
THERE NOW PERHAPS YOU REALIZE YOU HAVE A DUTY TOWARDS YOUR PUBLIC WHICH CANNOT BE SHIRKED
OH! FATHER DEAR FATHER YOUSE IS HEARTLESS!
PLEASE TELL THE MANAGER OF THE THEATRE WE ARE LEAVING NOW - YOU KNOW HOW TEMPERAMENTAL CHILD ACTORS ARE
AND NOW LADIES AND GENTLEMEN THE BAND STRIKES UP THE THEME SONG AND BRILLIANT LIGHTS ARE FOCUSED ON THE ENTRANCE - THE AUDIENCE STANDS - EXCITED WHISPERS PASS THROUGH THE THRONG - HE'S HERE! BUNKER HILL JR. THE GREATEST CHILD ACTOR IN THE WORLD HAS ARRIVED FOR A PERSONAL APPEARANCE AT THE WORLD PREMIER OF HIS FIRST TALKING PICTURE
PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK
BY
BILLY DEBECK
BANDS ARE PLAYING - FLAGS FLYING GREAT THRONGS LINE THE STREETS BRAVING THE GLARE OF HUNDREDS OF KLIEG LIGHTS - ROYAL RED CARPET LINED ON BOTH SIDES WITH MAJESTIC PALMS MAKES A PATH TO THE DOOR OF THE GREAT INDIAN PALACE, CATHEDRAL OF THE CINEMA. FOR TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT — TONIGHT. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THE WORLD PREMIERE of BUNKER HILL JR'S FIRST TALKING PICTURE WITH THE WONDER CHILD HIMSELF IN PERSON!
DE FAGAN YOUSE IS A VIPER
MARVELOUS — EXTRAORDINARY - REMARKABLE - INGENIOUS GENIUS
SHHHHHHHHHH
HERE HE COMES - THE CHILD WONDER HIMSELF
SPEECH SPEECH
LADIES AND GENTLEMAN
MY EMOTIONS ARE FAR BEYOND THE SCOPE OF MERE WORDS - I WISH TO THANK YOUSE TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE FOR YOUR WONDERFUL OVATION -
HE ALSO WISHES TO THANK THE GREAT PRODUCERS WITHOUT WHOM WE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REALIZE THE CHILDS GREAT AMBITION
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POOR CHILD - HE DOESN'T REALIZE THE FACT THAT TONIGHT HE RECEIVED HOMAGE THAT HERETOFORE WAS RENDERED ONLY TO KINGS - HE SHOULD HAVE A SPANKING!
AHH - WILL THE DAY NEVER COME WHEN I CAN PLAY WITH MY SIMPLE TOYS AND EAT HOMINY?

PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

Produced U.S. BY Yours Truly

BILLY DEBECK

THE METEORIC RISE OF LITTLE BUNKY HILL HAS FLASHED A NEW STAR ON THE HORIZON. A NEW IDOL FOR THE GREAT AMERICAN PUBLIC — THE POST OFFICE HAS DETAILED DOZENS OF EXTRA MEN TO HANDLE LITTLE BUNKY'S MAIL. THE TELEGRAPH COMPANIES ARE SWAMPED WITH CONGRATULATORY TELEGRAMS. AUTOMOBILE SALESMEN HAVE LINED THE BLOCK IN FRONT OF BUNKY'S HOUSE WITH SUMPTUOUS MOTOR CARS; AND

FOREIGN POTENTATES HAVE COME TO DO HONOR TO THE NEW KING, BUNKER HILL JR.

I AM THE RAJAH OF ZANZIBONE. I HAVE COME TO PAY HOMAGE TO YOUR CHILD THE GREATEST GENIUS OF THE AGE.

HE IS THE RAJAH OF ZANZ BONE. HE HAS COME TO PAY HOMAGE TO YOUR CHILD THE GREATEST GENIUS OF THE AGE

FANCY THAT!

YOUR HONOR, MY SON WILL BE INFORMED - COME IN!

WHAT NOW, FATHER DEAR?

INASMUCH AS YOU ARE BUSY MY SON YOUR DEAR MOTHER AND I WILL ENTERTAIN THE RAJAH ALONE!

BAH! FOR THIS EMPTY SHOW! WOULD THAT I WERE A BEGGAR AGAIN!! MY LIFE WAS AT LEAST MY OWN WHEN I TRUDGED THE STREETS IN SEARCH OF A CRUST OF BREAD - AND A PLACE TO LAY MY WEARY HEAD - SUCH INDEED IS FAME! - I'M TRAPPED BY SILKEN CORDS!

I SHALL ESCAPE - I SHALL - I SHALL!! NO MORE SHALL I BE USED AS A TALISMAN TO FILL THE GAP IN THE LIVES OF EMPTY HEADED HERO WORSHIPPERS!

ONE SIDE, YOU VIPERS!

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DE BECK

PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK

Produced U.S. BY Yours Truly

BILLY DEBECK

SICKENED BY THE ADULATION OF THOUSANDS - ANNOYED BY HIS OWN MOTHER AND FATHER BECAUSE OF THEIR DELIGHT IN OCCUPYING THE LIMELIGHT, LITTLE BUNKY HAS FLOWN

NO MORE WILL HE STAND BEFORE A MOTION PICTURE CAMERA TO DISH OUT AMUSEMENT BY THE YARD

HIS DESTINY LEADS HIM TO OTHER THINGS AND OTHER PATHS

I'LL FIND HIM HERE IN THE LUMBERYARD I AM SURE - AH WHAT A RELIEF NOT TO HAVE TO BREATHE SPECIALLY PURIFIED AIR -

NEVER SHOULD ANYONE UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF FREEDOM

IT SOITN'LY WUZ SWELL O' YOUSE TO LOOK ME UP, KID - HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE FAMOUS? I HOID ABOUT YOUSE IN DE MOVIES!

FAGAN! HOW DARE YOUSE TO BRING THAT UP?

SO YOUSE WANT TO STRING ALONG WIT ME, KID? SURE TING WUZN'T I ALWAYS YER PAL?

PROMISE ME YOUSE'LL BE HONEST AND WE'LL FACE THE WORLD TOGETHER!

ALL RIGHT ME LAD. I GOT ONE MORE JOB TO PULL - DEN I'LL TOIN OVER A NEW LEAF. I'LL TAKE YOUSE HOME WIT ME NOW

WHAT KIND OF A JOB HAVE YOUSE REFERENCE TO, FAGAN?

DON'T AST NO QUESTIONS, KID JES' WAIT FER ME TO COME BACK

FAGAN, YOUSE IS A VIPER!

DE BECK

PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK
BY BILLY DEBECK
NOW, BUNKY YOUSE STAY HERE AN' PLAY WIT DE RADIO I'M GOIN' OUT TO DO A JOB AN I CAN'T WASTE NO TIME!
OH! FAGAN, I THOUGHT MY COMING BACK TO YOU WOULD DO SOME GOOD - PROMISE ME, FAGAN, YOUSE WON'T DO ANYTHING WRONG TONIGHT- WON'T YOUSE?
I THOT I TOLD YOUSE NOT TO FOLLER ME!
FAGAN!!!!! COME BACK HERE- YOUSE DIDN'T PROMISE ME YOUSE'LL DO THE RIGHT THING TONIGHT
LISSEN-I DIDN'T AST YOUSE TO COME BACK HERE, DID I? WELL IF YOUSE WANTS TER STAY YOUSE'D BETTER MIND YER OWN BIZZNESS OR ELSE -
FAGAN, YOUSE IS A VIPER!
GEE! I GOTTA HUSTLE - DESE NIGHT JOBS GOTTA GIT DONE IN A HURRY - BEFORE DEM BOZOS TOIN IN
OH! FAGAN!!
TINKLE TINKLE TINKLE TINKLE
NOW'S ME CHANCE DE DOG AIN'T LOOKIN
FAGAN, A VIPER YOUSE ARE AND ALWAYS WILL BE- GIVE THAT POOR CREATURE HIS PENNIES - NEVER - NEVER WILL YOUSE BE HAPPY WITH YOUR ILL GOTTEN GAINS
SHUT-UP! THIRTY-FIVE FORTY-FORTY FIVE- GEE! ALMOST TWO DOLLARS!!
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PARLOR BEDROOM & SINK
BY BILLY DEBECK
FAGAN, DO YOUSE KNOW TODAY IS SUNDAY THE SIXTEENTH OF MARCH & WHY NOT START TODAY TO TURN OVER A NEW LEAF AND LEAD THE LIFE OF A NEW MAN?
DE SIXTEENTH DID YOUSE SAY?
GO AWAY AN LEAVE ME TINK! DE SIXTEENT O' MARCH - ME MUDDER'S BOITHDAY - OH ME POOR OL' MUDDER
WHY, FAGAN DID YOUSE HAVE A MOTHER? HOW EXTRAORDINARY! YOU NEVER MENTIONED HER BEFORE - WHAT WAS THE OLD WOMAN LIKE?
THERE, THERE FAGAN DON'T YOUSE TAKE ON SO!
I REMEMBER HOW I USTER SET ON HER KNEE AN SHE USTER SHOOT ME FULL O MOTHER GOOSE GAGS BLUB BLUB WHAT ME POOR MUDDER SUFFERED BECAUSE O' ME - I'M GOOD FOR NAWTHIN, BUNKY DAT'S WOT I AM -
IF SHE KNOWED DE LIFE I WUZ LEADIN - IT WOULD BUS HER HEART - I MUS TOIN OVER DAT NOO LEAF YOUSE WUZ TELLIN' ME ABOUT BUNKY I GOTTA DO IT FER ME POOR OL MUDDER'S SAKE
FAGAN! WHILE DON'T KNOW HOW IT WARMS MY HEART TO SEE THAT YOUR OWN IS NOT MADE OF STONE NEVER WOULD I HAVE BELIEVED THAT YOUR MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY WOULD DO THIS AH, WELL WONDERS NEVER CEASE AND WELL IT IS
BOO HOO
WOT AM I GONNA DO WIT MESELF. BUNKY?
YOUSE COME WITH ME AND I SHALL FIND YOUSE HONEST WORK - WITH GOOD PAY AND ADVANCEMENT
WHEN I WUZ PICK'N POCKETS ME BACK NEVER HOIT LIKE DIS
CARRY ON, FAGAN! REMEMBER YOUR MOTHER WOULD BE PROUD TO SEE YOUSE IN THAT SPLENDID UNIFORM!
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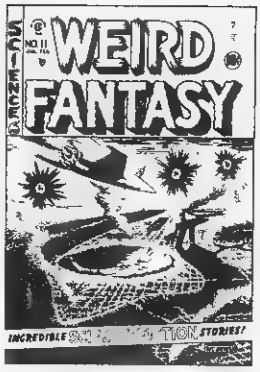
WEIRD SCIENCE

The complete 22-issue run of **WEIRD SCIENCE** features the artwork of Wally Wood, Joe Orlando, Al Williamson (some with Frazetta), editor/scripter Al Feldstein. Some of the stories are EC adaptations of work by Ray Bradbury. When **WEIRD SCIENCE** was cancelled, EC continued publishing science fiction in the comic **WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY** (later titled **INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION**).

Four volumes in slipcase, ppd: $75

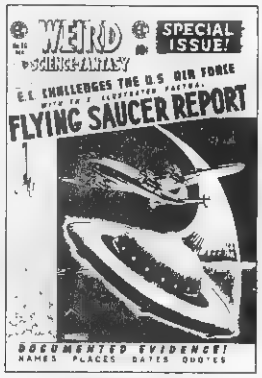


WEIRD FANTASY

Companion set to the **COMPLETE WEIRD SCIENCE**, this Feldstein-edited title also ran 22 issues and features the same line-up of artists (and adds Severin and Elder) and Bradbury adaptations. It was also discontinued by EC and once again the thread was picked up in the title **WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY**.

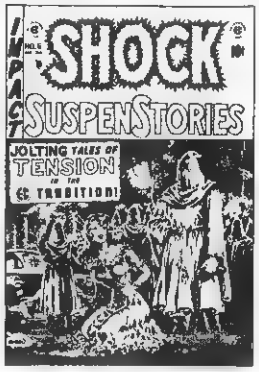
Four volumes in slipcase, ppd: $75

WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY



EC's final sf title, it featured work by the cream of EC's artists of the fantastic, including Wally Wood, Al Williamson, Joe Orlando, and adding Bernie Krigstein and Jack Davis. It's first issue was numbered 23, which continues the numbering from the two cancelled comics **WEIRD SCIENCE** and **WEIRD FANTASY** (both of which expired with #22). This comic was renamed **INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION** with #30 The final issue was #33, ending an eleven issue run.

Two volumes in slipcase, ppd: $45



SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES

These eighteen comics contain stories which range from the twist-ending short story to *film noir*-like thrillers to socially relevant pieces which are, in the words of critic Bhob Stewart, a "head-on collision with the real issues of American life." Among the artists represented here are Wally Wood, Joe Orlando, Jack Davis, George Evans and Reed Crandall.

Three volumes in slipcase, ppd: $60

CRYPT

One of three horror titles published by EC (another one, **VAULT OF HORROR**, is now available in this series, see below. The third, **HAUNT OF FEAR**, is yet to be published), this Feldstein-edited comic featured artwork by many EC favorites including Feldstein, Jack Davis, "Ghastly" Graham Ingels, Johnny Craig and (in later issues) Bernie Krigstein. Originally titled **CRYPT OF TERROR**, it was renamed **TALES FROM THE CRYPT**, and ran 30 issues.

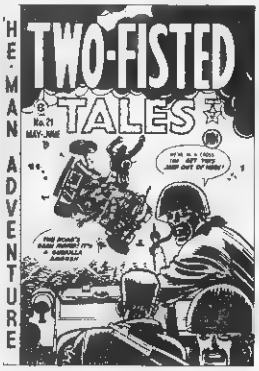
Five volumes in slipcase, ppd: $90

THE VAULT OF HORROR

Another in the trio of EC's horror titles, the 29-issue run of **VAULT** was edited by Johnny Craig, who not only did practically every "Vault Keeper" story but *all* the covers! Once again, EC's staple horror artists appear here, including Al Feldstein, Jack Davis, Graham Ingels and eventually Bernie Krigstein.

Five volumes in slipcase, ppd: $90

TWO-FISTED



EC's longest-running war book, this Kurtzman-edited comic features work by him and other action-oriented EC artists: Jack Davis, John Severin (or the Severin-Bill Elder team), Wally Wood, and an occasional piece by non-regulars such as Alex Toth and Joe Kubert. Issues 37, 38 and 39 were exclusively John Severin efforts, and sprinkled throughout are Kurtzman's special Civil War stories, like all his EC war work historical accuracy is a hallmark

Four volumes in slipcase, ppd: $75

FRONTLINE

A companion to **TWO-FISTED TALES**, **FRONTLINE** was also edited by Harvey Kurtzman and features much the same artist lineup. More of the EC Civil War stories appear here, as well. Again, attention to authentic detail and historical accuracy is evident throughout.

Three volumes in slipcase, ppd: $60

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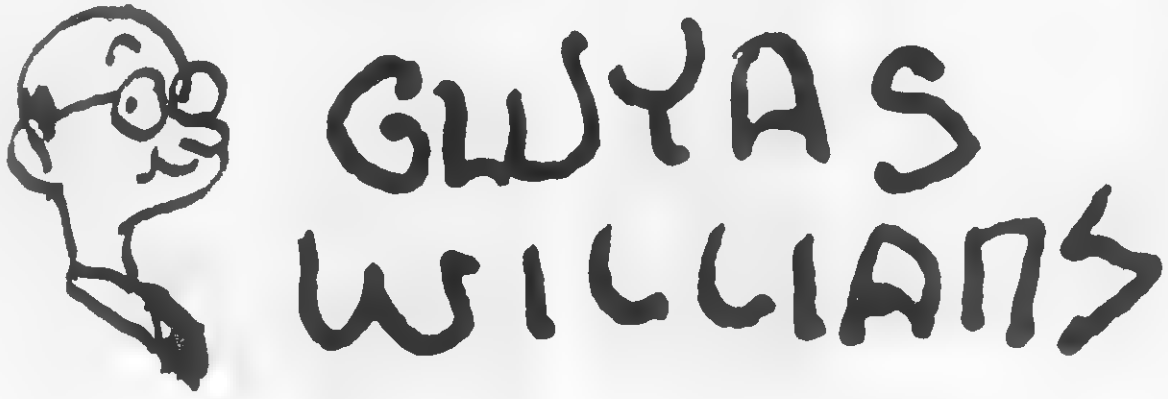
Penmen of the Past



Gluyas Williams did more with less than practically any cartoonist in history. His masterful panel drawings are genre studies, more often than not crowded with figures, and frequently confusion is the mood. No: Confusion is the subject; urbanity *is the mood.*

Gluyas Williams's art observed but never attacked. It chuckled rather than ridiculed. And, always, it shared instead of condescended.

The artist's work was a part—indeed his career and friendships were a part—of the Little Man school of humor that reigned in America in the '20s and '30s. As with Robert Benchley's literary anti-hero (and Williams illustrated more than a hundred Benchley stories through the years), all of Williams's characters somewhat nervously floated through the Twentieth Century, slightly intimidated by technology and more than a little suspicious of the traps and trappings of modern life that awaited, ready to attack, around every corner.

Perfect were his evocations of personality types and the upper-middle-class milieux *that he delineated. But Gluyas Williams's most stunning accomplishments were as a draftsman. Here was an artist in total command of his media—every pen line is in place, nothing superfluous, yet everything so marvelously expressive.*

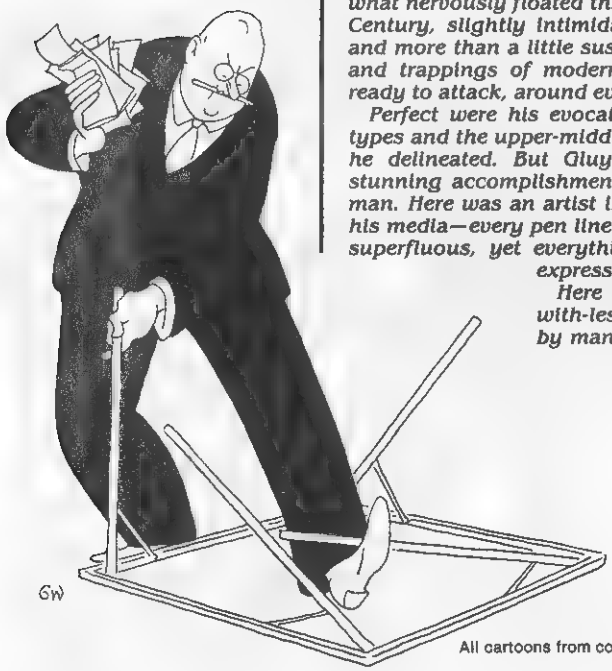
Here is the doing-more-with-less ideal, aspired to by many cartoonists, in its finest incarnation. At the turn of the century, when detailed crosshatching reigned, the British cartoonist Phil May was asked if he felt guilty being paid so much when his drawings were so sketchy and economical of line. He is said to have replied: "If I could do what I do with half the number of lines, I would demand twice the amount of money!"

The stark economy in a Williams cartoon came nowhere close to sterility; rather the scenes were vibrant and bursting with personality. Every figure is doing something—and doing something so expressively that you feel a part of the scene. Added to these gifts were Williams's awesome sense of design, perspective, and composition.

I found it interesting that one of his earliest influences was Caran d'Ache, whose work Williams's little resembled. Likewise, I was surprised when he once told me his favorite strip artists were Segar and Frank Willard; Popeye *and* Moon Mullins *were two of the most slapstick of strips—and completely different in flavor from his own cartoons. Yet Williams was an observer of humor as well as of life, and a consummate craftsman. In this vein, as the following interview shows, he was able to lecture Harold Ross of* The New Yorker *(of all people!) on humor, and have his points acknowledged.*

The interview, Williams's last and one of the few he ever granted, was conducted in 1975. Gluyas Williams was born in 1888 and died in 1982.

—Rick Marschall

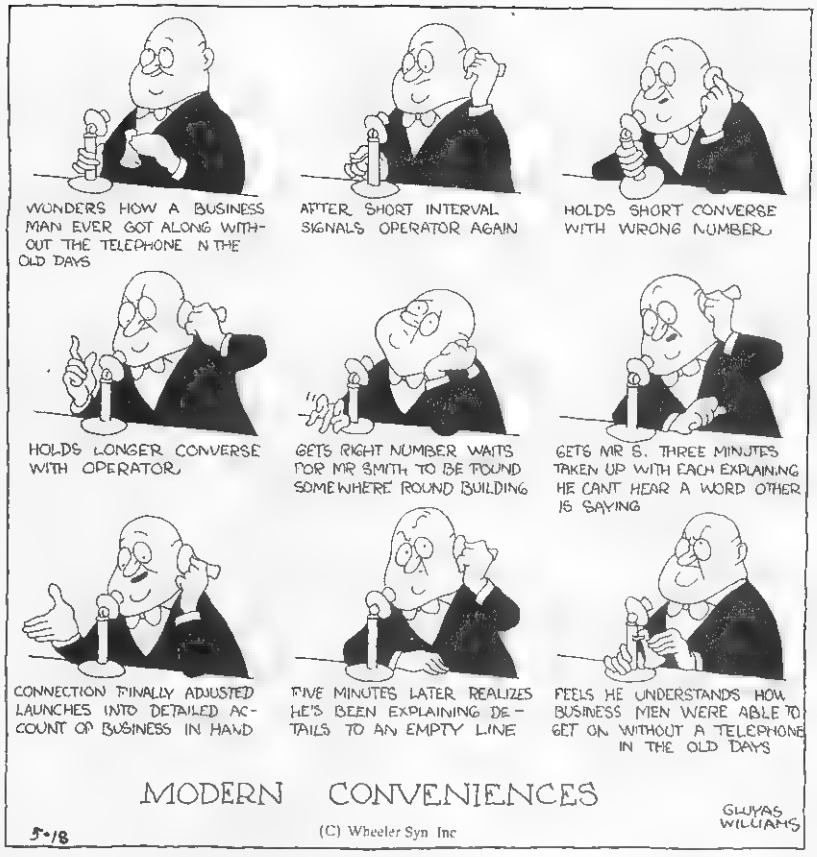


All cartoons from collection of Rick Marschall

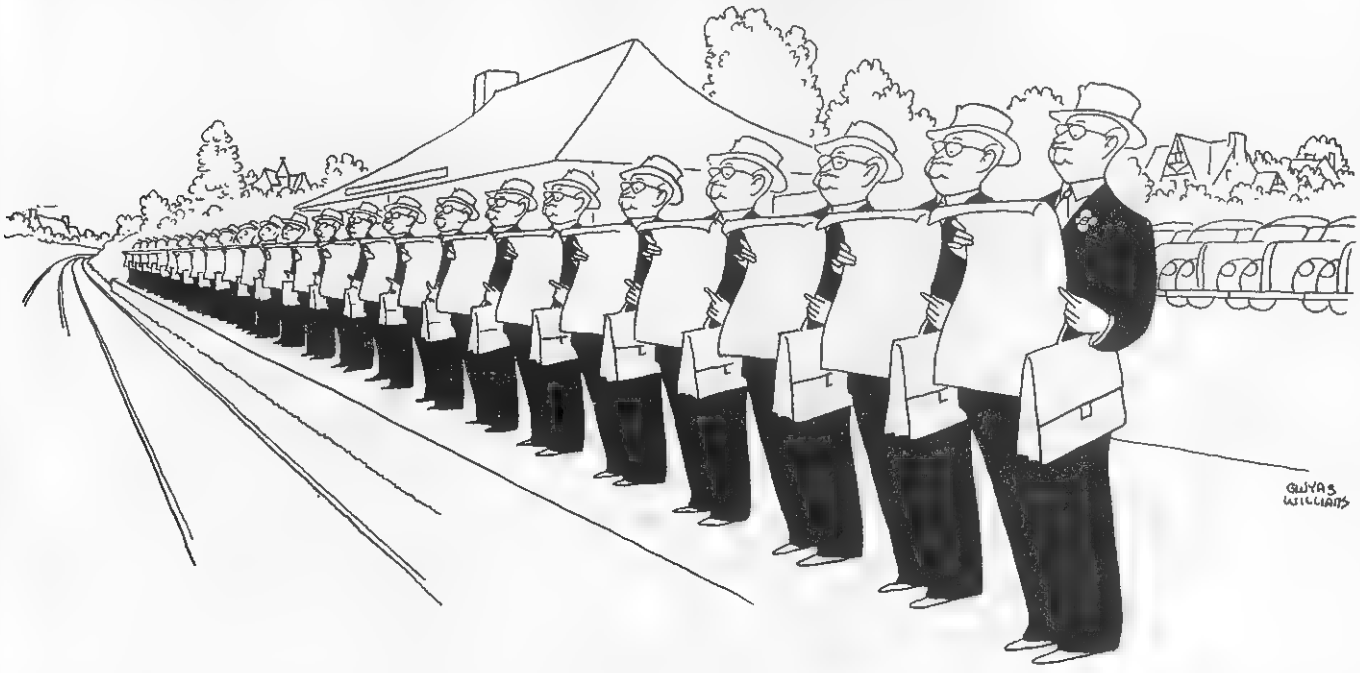
Marschall: *You were born in San Francisco, as many great cartoonists were.*
Williams: Right.
Marschall: *You had formal training, didn't you?*
Williams: Well, most of it was on the *Lampoon*, but I did take my senior year in college—I went through in three years...
Marschall: *That's at Harvard, right?*

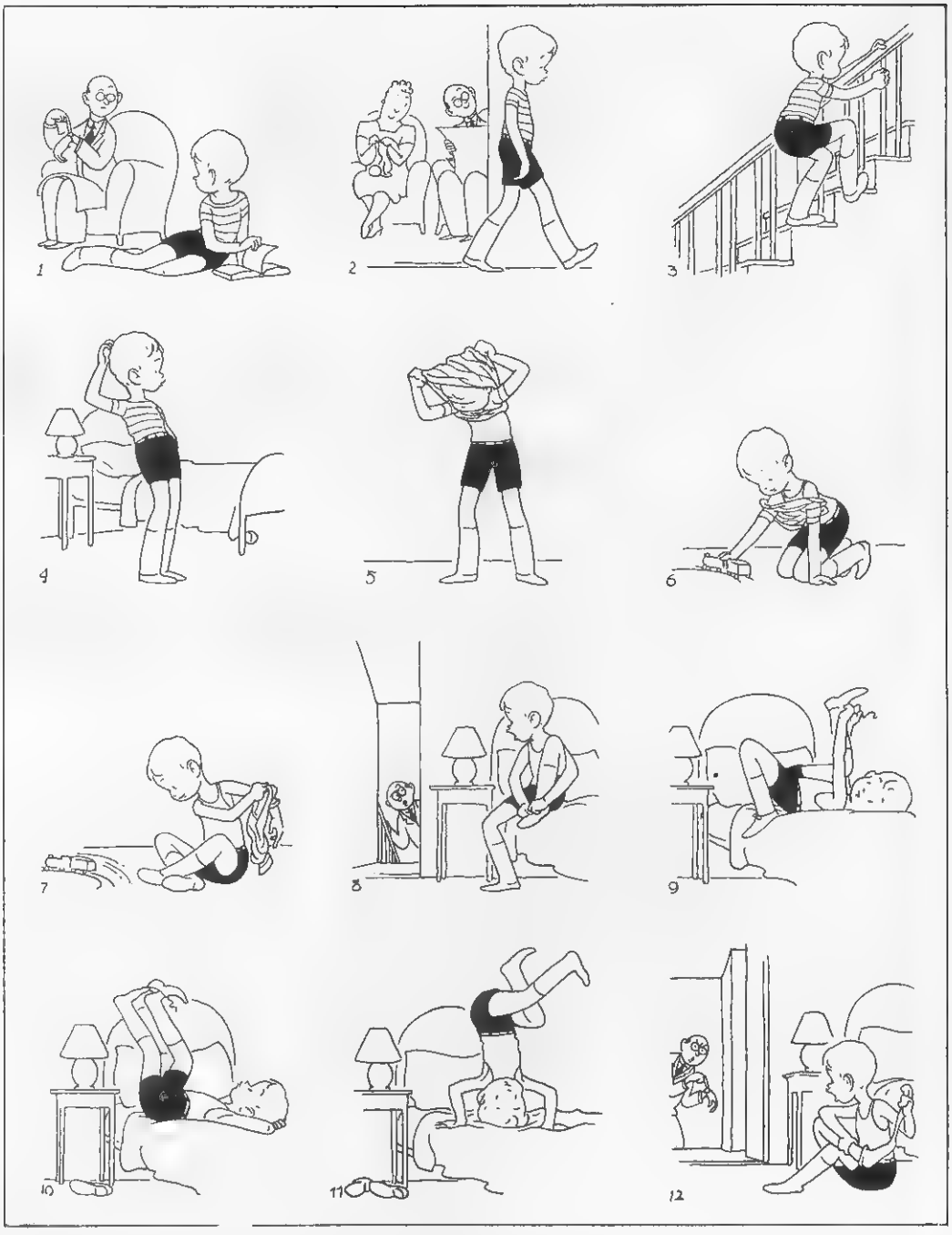
Williams: Right... and then went to Paris. Just the usual thing, a studio and the rest...
Marschall: *Were you studying then, to be a fine artist, a portrait painter?*
Williams: No, no; but I just had an idea that it would do me good... and I think it did, too. I mean you learn how the body is put together, and just draw and draw and draw all day long.
Marschall: *Were you working in all media, or just pen and ink?*
Williams: Well, charcoal at the studios...
Marschall: *Conte crayons?*
Williams: Yes.
Marschall: *Did you always have it in mind to be a cartoonist or caricaturist?*
Williams: Pretty much, although I went to Harvard because I had ideas of going to law school. And that quickly evaporated! But after drawing for the *Lampoon* for three years I knew.
Marschall: *Did you write for the* Lampoon *also?*
Williams: No, no.
Marschall: *I remember—or, rather, I have a run of the old* Life *magazine—in which you not only drew but wrote...*
Williams: Oh, yes, I did "Senator Sounder."
Marschall: *Funny stuff!*
Williams: Well... I should have stuck to drawing.
Marschall: *That's why I wondered if you had written for the* Lampoon. *You were art editor of the magazine, weren't you?*
Williams: Yes.
Marschall: *If your direction was to cartooning at the beginning, when you were growing up did you have any idols...in* Puck, *say, or any of the newspapers? Anyone whose work you copied?*
Williams: Well, I always was very devoted to Caran d'Ache, the French cartoonist. I liked his things enormously; although our styles of drawing were entirely different, his way of approaching things appealed to me. And I was also much influenced by my sister's drawings.
Marschall: *She was Kate Carew...*
Williams: Yes. She was in the big time and I sort of lived in that newspaper atmosphere through her. And she was good, too!
Marschall: *So, of the two of you, she came first, professionally.*
Williams: Well, I think she, being in the family, made it so I had her all my life to admire and follow. But Caran d'Ache, he was great.

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS


Hello! Hello!
WONDERS HOW A BUSINESS MAN EVER GOT ALONG WITHOUT THE TELEPHONE IN THE OLD DAYS
AFTER SHORT INTERVAL SIGNALS OPERATOR AGAIN
HOLDS SHORT CONVERSE WITH WRONG NUMBER
HOLDS LONGER CONVERSE WITH OPERATOR
GETS RIGHT NUMBER WAITS FOR MR SMITH TO BE FOUND SOMEWHERE ROUND BUILDING
GETS MR S. THREE MINUTES TAKEN UP WITH EACH EXPLAINING HE CANT HEAR A WORD OTHER IS SAYING
CONNECTION FINALLY ADJUSTED LAUNCHES INTO DETAILED ACCOUNT OF BUSINESS IN HAND
FIVE MINUTES LATER REALIZES HE'S BEEN EXPLAINING DETAILS TO AN EMPTY LINE
FEELS HE UNDERSTANDS HOW BUSINESS MEN WERE ABLE TO GET ON WITHOUT A TELEPHONE IN THE OLD DAYS
MODERN CONVENIENCES
5-18
(C) Wheeler Syn Inc
GLUYAS WILLIAMS

Marschall: *He really developed what was later called the comic strip—the sequential cartoon...*
Williams: Yes, he was just great.
Marschall: *Getting back to Kate Carew, what were some of the features she did? She drew comic strips for Pulitzer, didn't she?*
Williams: Well, she mostly—her real work was in interviews and theatre (caricatures). And then she started a Sunday page called *The Angel Child*, I think. And that was only so-so—it was all right, I guess...





Marschall: *That made her just about the first major female cartoonist along with Rose O'Neill and Grace Wiederseim...*

Williams: She was, yes. They had the newspaper trucks, you know, that went around town—that was in the early 1900s—all had "See Kate Carew, the only woman caricaturist," or something like that, and she did a lot of caricatures. They sent her everywhere—sent her over to Europe to come back with Teddy Roosevelt on the boat...

Marschall: *In 1910?*

Williams: When he came back from his hunting trip, yes. And then when she—she began on the N.Y. *World* and then she switched to the *Tribune* and somewhere along there she was sent abroad to London, because I know she was in London when the War broke out. And it was then that she did a great many theatre things—caricatures—for the *Tattler*, for the *Sketch*. She was good!

Marschall: *Speaking of England, and referring to your influences again, did H.M. Bateman influence you at all, or did he come up at the same time?*

Williams: I didn't know anything about Bateman until I was drawing myself, and then I began to see *Punch* more. He was a great boy...

Marschall: *I don't know who came first but your work might have influenced him...*

Williams: No, I don't believe so; I think he came first. I know he did, because he did the famous thing—"The One-Note Man"—I remember that came out just as I was starting on *Life*. Just after Charles Dana Gibson bought it.

Marschall: *About 1920 or so?*

Williams: About then.

Marschall: *You only joined* Life *then, after Gibson bought it?*

Williams: Well, they had accepted some drawings beforehand, but that was the first time I got—well, that was it. I had a long interval there, after I left college (in 1911) and I started a strip on the old *Boston Journal*.

Marschall: *A Sunday strip?*

Williams: No, a daily, and it was *terrible*! Oh, you have no idea how bad it was! Well, I worked at it one full summer and then I said, "This is not for me!"—and vice versa. And I got a job on *The Youth's Companion*, on the editorial side.

Marschall: *Weren't they headquartered in Boston?*

Williams: That's right. I worked there for 10 years. I was drawing on my own time all that time, without selling much of anything... and then I submitted one to *Life* and it was turned down. Then I sent it to *Collier's*. I don't know why I selected them, but for some reason they fell for it and ran it on their front page, and got Will Irwin to write some verses under each drawing—and of course that was a big boost for me...

Marschall: *Did that become a regular feature?*

Williams: No, just a one-shot. And the art editor of *Collier's* then went over to *Life* about the time that Gibson bought it.

Marschall: *That would be Casey.*

Williams: Yes, Frank Casey. And he recommended me to Gibson. So that gave me a foothold. But Gibson was wonderful to me.

Marschall: *Did you ever know Mitchell (John Ames Mitchell, the founder of* Life*)? He died just about this time.*

Williams: I think I met him, but just fleetingly. Because he died before Gibson bought it.

Marschall: *Did Charles Dana Gibson have much personal involvement with the magazine after he bought it? Did he look at all the art?*

Williams: Well, yes and no. He took a very close interest in it, but he didn't try to suggest or do things... he would go along with things that people on the art end—Casey—thought, and he'd let the editor (Robert E. Sherwood), the writing end, have full reign. He really didn't play an active part, except that he was always around.

Marschall: *Before we finish on your days with* Life*: do you remember the title of your comic strip for the* Boston Journal?

Williams: No, I don't. All I remember is that it

A Williams caricature for *The Boston Transcript* of Potash and Perlmutter, vaudeville team, ca. 1918.

was terrible. Let's not talk about it.

Marschall: *You joined* Life *at a transition time; the founders were passing on—Mitchell died in '18 and (business manager) Andrew Miller died in 1919—E.S. Martin, however, writing to the very last issue (in 1936), but just after the war we see that a lot of the old-timers were gone and a whole flock of new artists and writers joined. Such as you and Benchley and Sherwood—there were so many, it was almost like a new magazine all of a sudden...*

Williams: Yes, in a way...

Marschall: *Did you work right in the office or did you send the material?*

Williams: I'd go over once in a while but I was based in Boston.

Marschall: *I get the feeling from reading the old magazines that there was almost fellowship among the staffers. Were you all good friends; was it like a fraternity?*

Williams: I wasn't really there enough to say for sure. Whenever I went, it was always sort of a party, and we'd all get together and have dinner at the Players and go to a show. I mean they'd make a little occasion of it. But the daily experience I don't know.

Marschall: *You wrote "Senator Sounder" (a political spoof) week after week, and I guess some other stuff...*

Williams: I don't think I wrote anything else.

Marschall: *Did you enjoy humorous writing?*

Williams: No, it was torture! Although I didn't mind "Senator Sounder," I just wasn't a writer.

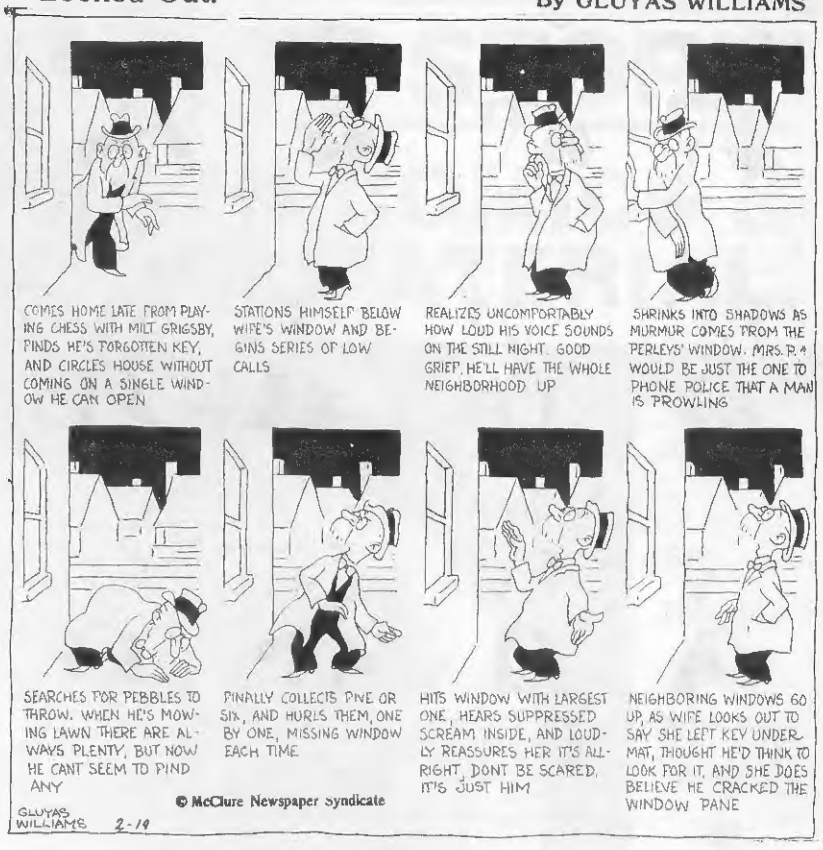
Marschall: *It gave you a great opportunity to do political caricatures, with Lodge and Borah and the rest...*

Williams: Yes. And then Hearst got hold of me on those.

Marschall: *You worked for Hearst?*

Williams: Yes, for awhile. He saw my things for the *Transcript*, I think (theatrical caricatures for the *Boston Transcript*), and he fell for them. And he wrote to one of his editors and said to get hold of me and send me around. It didn't last very long; I didn't enjoy it very much.

Marschall: *Was that just drawing?*
Williams: Yes, no writing. He'd send me to Washington to see the current gang down there.
Marschall: *It seems that just about every one in the business was connected with Hearst at one time or another*
Williams: Yes!
Marschall: *When did you join* The New Yorker? *Were you there from the start?*
Williams: Practically from the start, but not actually, because they tried to get me to go over. Harold Ross would write, but I'd say that I was based in Boston and I didn't know enough about New York to be of any use. And then finally he sent me a cartoon idea, about the house wrecker who has the wrong address. I did it, and sent it over, and Ross sent it back and said that it won't do; he said to get more fun into it—have a woman taking a bath while they're taking the bathtub out, and like that. He said to change it and put those things in it, and he'd buy it. I sent it back just as it was and said, No, I wouldn't touch it, because my idea of humor was understatement rather than slapstick, and Ross wrote—oh, how I wish I'd kept that letter!—it was a wonderful letter back saying, "You're perfectly right, I'm going to change all my ideas on drawings. Of course that's much subtler your way and better." And after that letter I thought to myself that this was an editor I'd like to work for.
Marschall: *That must have been a big influence in the direction of* The New Yorker; *Arno's early work—like the "Whoops Sisters"—was kind of slapsticky...*
Williams: Yes, but he was Arno to the last. I may have been an influence, but Ross... I remember one thing: Ross would never allow the slightest double entendre—he was meticulous about what went into the magazine. He insisted on absolute cleanliness. He was a wonderful guy.
Marschall: *Do you remember your first encounter with Robert Benchley?*
Williams: Well, I knew him on the *Lampoon*.
Marschall: *Did you illustrate his stuff then?*
Williams: Oh, yes, but it was mostly drawings that he'd submit—and they were darn good drawings, too!
Marschall: *So you, as art editor, passed on his first efforts...*
Williams: You know, in the forewords that he wrote for some of my books, he describes when one art editor was supposed to have taken him aside and said, "Now look, Benchley, you've written some things, so why don't you just stick to that? We've got plenty of pictures." Then he'd complain that he could've been making ten thousand dollars a week if he'd just stuck to drawing. Of course he just made that up; I don't think I ever said any such thing at all.
Marschall: *I think some of his funniest writing—just as with Perelman—was the very earliest stuff never collected in book form.*
Williams: Well, maybe.
Marschall: *I'd like to talk about your drawing style—your amazing grasp of every nuance of a subject or personality. When you travelled, did you take a sketchbook, were you always noting styles and attitudes—or did you just keep a mental file?*
Williams: Mostly mental. But I was apt to sit down just after getting back from somewhere. Especially in the Paris days, I'd sit down and record everything in pictures. I never wanted people staring at me, looking over my shoulder.
Marschall: *Did you have an extensive morgue of photos and sketches?*
Williams: No. Oh, I had some, but not much, really.
Marschall: *Simplicity was always your trademark...*
Williams: Yes, well, that I did try for.
Marschall: *And the spotting of blacks. It all looks so simple. It held up well in newspapers, and you worked for John Wheeler (the Bell Syn-*


Suburban Heights.
Locked Out.
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS
COMES HOME LATE FROM PLAYING CHESS WITH MILT GRIGSBY, FINDS HE'S FORGOTTEN KEY, AND CIRCLES HOUSE WITHOUT COMING ON A SINGLE WINDOW HE CAN OPEN
STATIONS HIMSELF BELOW WIFE'S WINDOW AND BEGINS SERIES OF LOW CALLS
REALIZES UNCOMFORTABLY HOW LOUD HIS VOICE SOUNDS ON THE STILL NIGHT. GOOD GRIEF, HE'LL HAVE THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD UP
SHRINKS INTO SHADOWS AS MURMUR COMES FROM THE PERLEYS' WINDOW. MRS. P. A WOULD BE JUST THE ONE TO PHONE POLICE THAT A MAN IS PROWLING
SEARCHES FOR PEBBLES TO THROW. WHEN HE'S MOWING LAWN THERE ARE ALWAYS PLENTY, BUT NOW HE CANT SEEM TO FIND ANY
FINALLY COLLECTS FIVE OR SIX, AND HURLS THEM, ONE BY ONE, MISSING WINDOW EACH TIME
HITS WINDOW WITH LARGEST ONE, HEARS SUPPRESSED SCREAM INSIDE, AND LOUDLY REASSURES HER IT'S ALL RIGHT, DONT BE SCARED, IT'S JUST HIM
NEIGHBORING WINDOWS GO UP, AS WIFE LOOKS OUT TO SAY SHE LEFT KEY UNDER MAT, THOUGHT HE'D THINK TO LOOK FOR IT, AND SHE DOES BELIEVE HE CRACKED THE WINDOW PANE
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GLUYAS WILLIAMS 2-19

COME, LITTLE ONES, AND WE WILL STUDY MOTHER NATURE IN HER OWN HAUNTS.
DOES THE SPIDER WIGGLE GOOD?
GEE! THIS TOY SNAKE WUZ A GREAT IDEA OF THE ANGEL'S!
FINE! I JES' LOVE NACHER LESSONS, DOANCHOO?
2.

BELOW:
A panel from *The Angel Child* by Williams's sister Kate Carew from the New York *World*, 1904.

Snapshots of a Man Listening to An After-Dinner Speech.

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

GLUYAS WILLIAMS 10-25
SCRAPES CHAIR NOISILY BACK AND ASSUMES COMFORTABLE LISTENING ATTITUDE AS SPEAKER BEGINS
WHISPERS TO NEIGHBOR THAT THAT WAS AN OLD ONE - HEARD IT THREE YEARS AGO. NEIGHBOR DOESN'T QUITE GET THIS.
AFTER REPEATING IT TWICE REALIZES HE'S DRAWING ATTENTION TO HIMSELF AND TRIES TO PUT MIND ON SPEECH. FAILS.
SIGNALS TO MAN AT END OF TABLE TO PASS THE CIGARS. MAN SIGNALS 'SURE' AND PASSES FIRST BREAD, THEN MATCHES
GIVES UP TRYING TO MAKE MAN UNDERSTAND WISHES HE HAD A SMOKE BUT SEES NO SENSE IN USING HIS OWN CIGARS WITH ALL THESE
FREE ONES LYING AROUND AMUSES HIMSELF TRYING TO BALANCE SPOON ON EDGE OF TUMBLER.
SPOON FALLS IN WITH LOUD CLATTER. ASSUMES LOOK OF GREAT INTENTNESS ON WHAT SPEAKER IS SAYING
CONFERS WITH WATCH AND TIMETABLE BENEATH EDGE OF TABLE
© McClure Newspaper Syndicate
LOOKS ROUND FOR DOORWAY AND DEBATES POSSIBILITIES OF SNEAKING OUT UNOBSERVED. GIVES IT UP
WONDERS IS THE SPEAKER LOOKING RIGHT AT HIM OR ISN'T HE? DECIDES TO SHOW GOOD FEELING IN ANY CASE BY
APPLAUDING LOUDLY AT END OF NEXT SENTENCE. THIS SOLITARY OUTBURST SPREADS IMPRESSION HE'S SLIGHTLY DRUNK
SPENDS REMAINDER OF SPEECH TRYING TO BE INCONSPICUOUS AND TO REMOVE SOUP SPOT FROM LAPEL OF COAT

dicate) for years. Do you remember just how long?

Williams: Oh, he had it over 20 years, I guess (Williams's panel was entitled *Suburban Heights* and featured Fred Perley).

Marschall: *And, at the same time, the books and the* New Yorker *stuff...*

Williams: Yes.

Marschall: *Is there anything else about your career you'd like to cover?*

Williams: No, you've bled me dry!

Marschall: *You were obviously an influence on so many other cartoonists; Rea Irvin, for instance...*

Williams: Oh no, he was before me. And a fine draftsman, too.

Marschall: *The inevitable question: What kind of pens did you use? And did you work fast?*

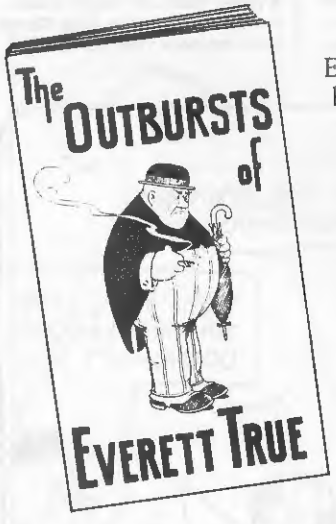
Williams: My method? Well, I'd find a pen and stick it in a penholder... Really, I'd pencil rather carefully and then I'd correct mistakes as I'd ink.

Marschall: *Do you follow the comics today? Read the* New Yorker*?*

Williams: Well, I used to, but I find very little that I care to look at now. The papers crowd them in so, that instead of really giving cartoons a decent showing they jam them in. You have to get a magnifying glass to look at them. It must be frustrating for the cartoonist—my syndicate, towards the end, wanted to reduce my panel to two columns. I screamed, but I suppose they patted me on the back, saying it's terrible, and went ahead and did it. But I think some papers kept me at three, and some at four columns.

Marschall: Those *were the days. And this has been a great day. Thank you for your time and memories you've shared.* n

HE'S BACK!



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